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HISTORY of WAR



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PLUS:
Salamanca eagle
Siege of Jerusalem
Catalaunian Plains

ZULU WAR

HOW BRITAIN'S DISASTER AT ISANDLWANA TURNED INTO A BRUTAL CONQUEST



B-17
FLYING FORTRESS
IN THE COCKPIT OF THE USA'S
ICONIC HEAVY BOMBER



17TH-CENTURY MERCENARY
LIFE ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR



PHILIPPINES IN FLAMES
ORIGINS OF THE DECADES-LONG MORO INSURGENCY



BARBARIAN INVASION
STEP INSIDE THE CHAOS OF ROME'S FINAL DAYS

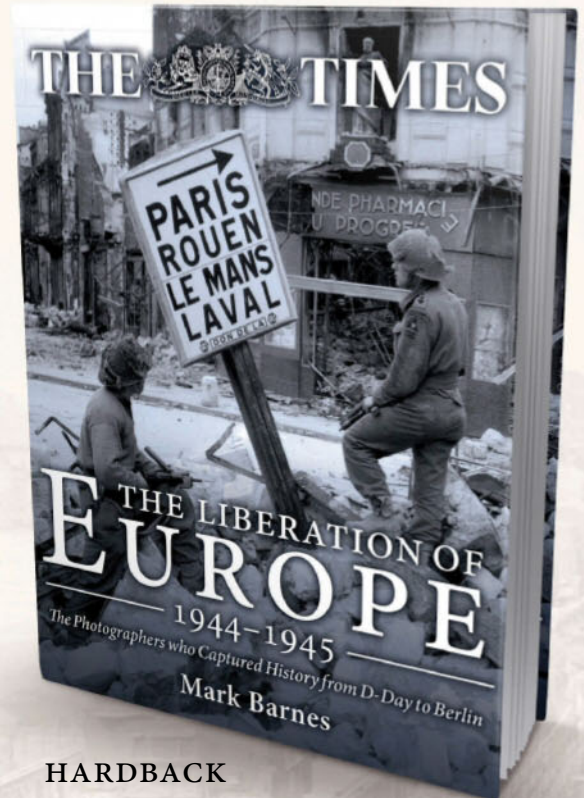
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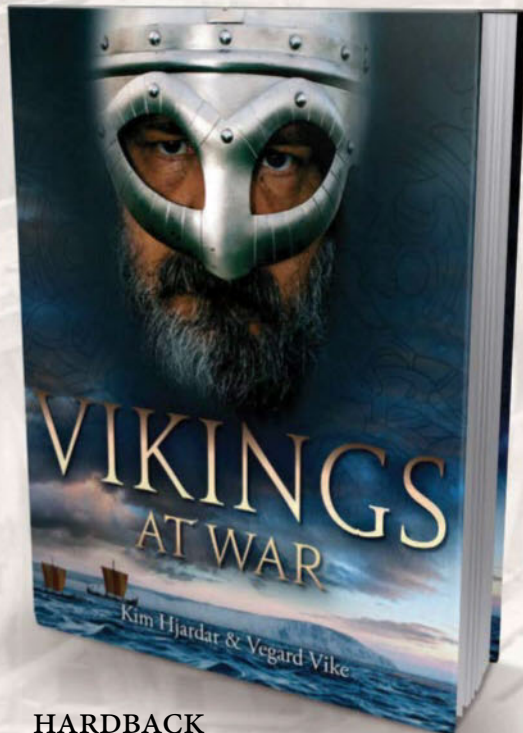
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Welcome

“The terrible disaster has shaken me to the centre”

– Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, after Isandlwana

On 22 January 1879, the British military suffered one of its most embarrassing defeats at the hands of a foe it had fatally underestimated: the army of the Zulu Kingdom. Though the disaster at Isandlwana would swiftly be eclipsed by an against-the-odds victory at Rorke’s Drift, the rest of the Anglo-Zulu War would be far from a glorious campaign.


This issue’s cover feature explores how the war’s opening bloodbath was just the first of a string of colonial blunders. British commanders not only repeatedly overestimated the strength of their more-advanced

weaponry, they were also outmanoeuvred, outnumbered and often out-thought by the battle-hardened Zulu warriors.



Tim

Tim Williamson
Editor

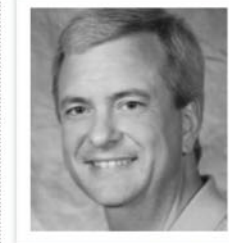
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TOM GARNER

Tom re-watched both *Zulu* and *Zulu Dawn* this month to get him in the right frame of mind for this issue’s cover feature on the Anglo-Zulu War (page 38). He also took a trip to the RAF Museum to climb inside their B-17 Flying Fortress (page 80).



MICHAEL HASKEEW

The Normandy landings in June 1944 were just the beginning of a long, gruelling campaign to liberate France. This issue, Mike explores one of these desperate armoured clashes in his Great Battles feature on the Battle of Villers-Bocage (page 28).



MIGUEL MIRANDA

Focusing on a conflict a little closer to home this issue, Miguel takes on the decades-long Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines (page 74). He explores its origins and the intricate politics that have marked its history.

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Prince Dabulamanzi KaMpande, Cetshwayo’s half-brother who was the commander at Rorke’s Drift and Gingindlovu



ZULU WAR

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This Napoleonic treasure was captured by a British officer at the Battle of Salamanca



PHILIPPINES IN FLAMES

74 Uncover the roots of a decades-long insurgency



WARⁱⁿ **FOCUS**

HEATING UP IN 'NAM

Taken: 4 May 1968

A member of the US Army 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, walks casually past a burning Viet Cong operations base. Over his shoulder is slung an M67 recoilless rifle – an anti-tank weapon that was frequently called upon to attack fortified positions and even enemy troops during the Vietnam War.



WAR_{in}
FOCUS
**ANTHEM FOR
DOOMED YOUTH**

Taken: c 1939

Photograph of Hitler Youth members, taken by Nazi propagandist Helmut Stellrecht. By 1939, there were close to 8 million members in the group, making it the largest of its kind – by this time, it was mandatory to join.







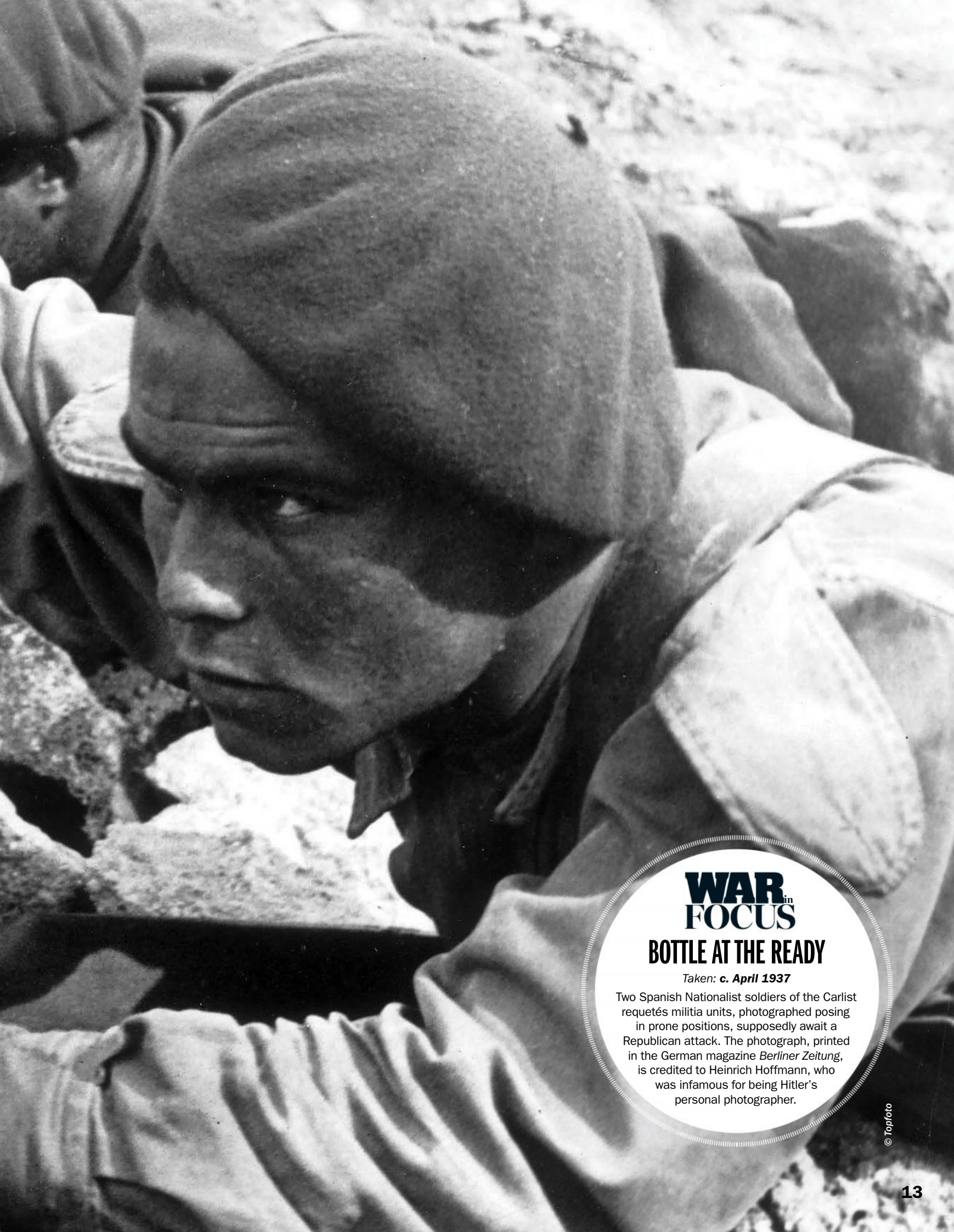


WAR
in
FOCUS
AN ICY GRAVE

Taken: c. 2002

The Russian cruiser Murmansk sits frozen off the coast of northern Norway in the exact spot it ran aground in 1994. Launched in 1955, Murmansk served in the Soviet then Russian navies, before being decommissioned and sold for scrap. En route to India, it ran aground, and was eventually broken up in 2009.





WAR
in
FOCUS

BOTTLE AT THE READY

Taken: c. April 1937

Two Spanish Nationalist soldiers of the Carlist requetés militia units, photographed posing in prone positions, supposedly await a Republican attack. The photograph, printed in the German magazine *Berliner Zeitung*, is credited to Heinrich Hoffmann, who was infamous for being Hitler's personal photographer.



TIMELINE OF THE... FALL OF ROME

During the period of Pax Romana, Rome enjoyed peace, but the migration of barbarian tribes into the empire doomed its western half in the 5th century

378-95



A TEMPORARY REPRIEVE

In the aftermath of Adrianople, Theodosius restores order but he allows the barbarians to settle on imperial territory. Serving in the Roman army under their own commanders, the barbarians become difficult to control.

Left: With his successors showing little fitness to rule, both the eastern and western empires were plagued with disasters after Theodosius's death

400

MASSACRE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

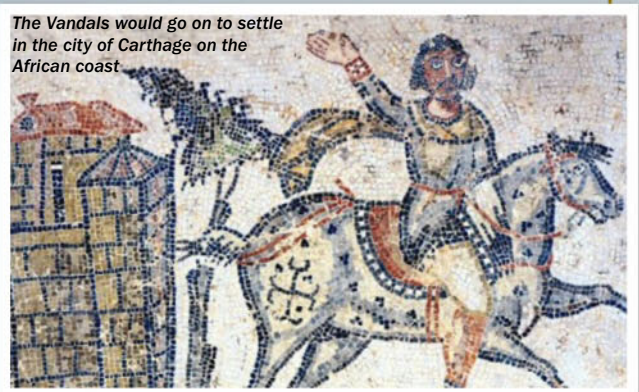
Hating the barbarian, heretical Arian Visigoths, the populace of the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire rises up against them. More than 7,000 Gothic men, women and children are brutally massacred as they try to evacuate the city.

405/06

RHINE FREEZES OVER

On the final day of 406, the Rhine freezes over and huge numbers of Germanic Vandals, Suevi and Alans evade Roman border defences and cross over into the empire.

The Vandals would go on to settle in the city of Carthage on the African coast.




Attila, known as 'the Scourge of God', leads the Huns as they sweep into Italy



INVASION OF ITALY

With his army stricken by the plague, Attila meets with Pope Leo I outside Rome and agrees to leave Italy. Attila dies the next year while celebrating his wedding.

407  452 



Odoacer compels the boy emperor, Romulus Augustulus, to yield the crown of the Western Roman Empire to him in Rome

THE LAST EMPEROR

Rome's final emperor of the west, the young Romulus Augustulus, is deposed by the barbarian general Odoacer. The Fall of Rome is traditionally dated to this event.

453  476 



Left: Constantine III was also known as the usurper and first took power in Britain and Gaul

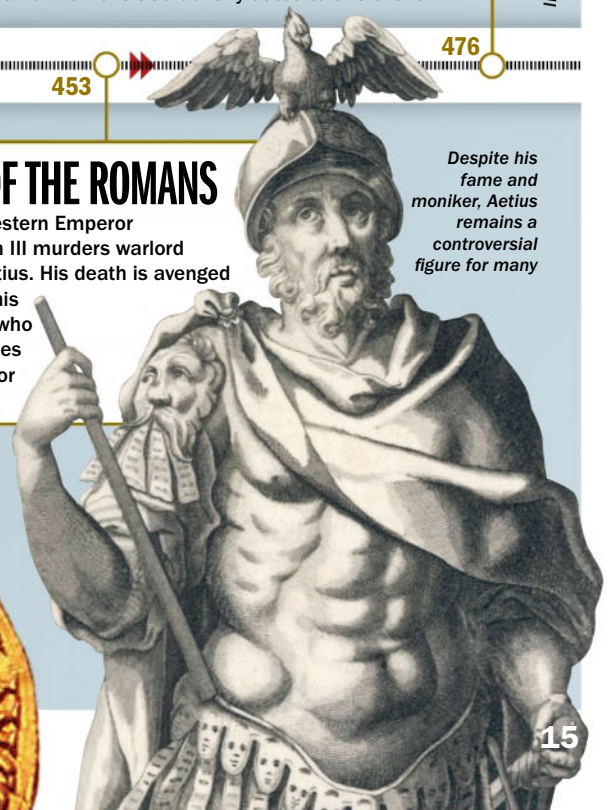
EVACUATION OF BRITAIN

Constantine III, a usurper in Britain, leads all Roman troops out of Britain to Gaul. The country is left without a Roman garrison and now has to look to its own defence.

LAST OF THE ROMANS

Jealous western Emperor Valentinian III murders warlord Flavius Aetius. His death is avenged by one of his retainers, who assassinates the emperor in 455.

Despite his fame and moniker, Aetius remains a controversial figure for many



Images: Alamy, TopFoto

MAP OF LATE ANTIQUITY

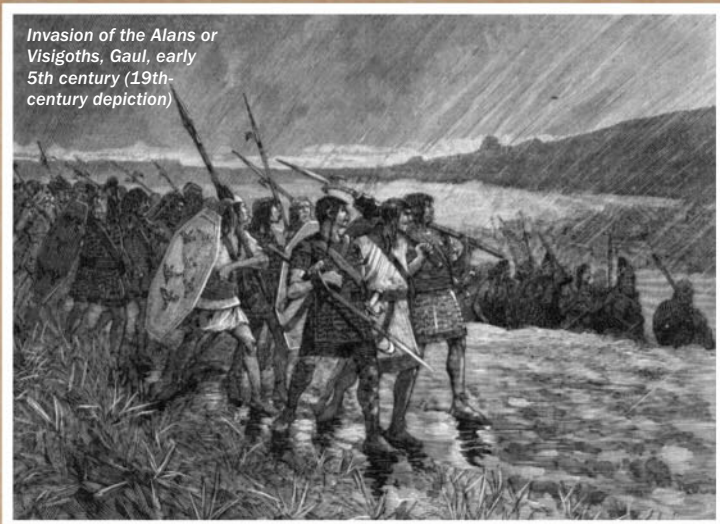
The borders of the once mighty empire gradually shrank against the invading tribes from across Europe and beyond

1 BATTLE OF THE MILVIAN BRIDGE 312

Just outside Rome, Constantine wins the battle against Maxentius under the auspices of the Christian God. He becomes the sole ruler of the empire and Rome is once again united and at peace.

2 BATTLE OF ADRIANOPOLE 378

Escaping the Huns, the Visigoths receive permission to cross the Danube into the empire. Mistreated by imperial officials, they go to war, and in August destroy a Roman army at Adrianople.



Invasion of the Alans or Visigoths, Gaul, early 5th century (19th-century depiction)

Below: An anachronistic painting of Alaric and his Goths looting sacred objects from a church



BARBARIANS INVADE BRITAIN
367 BRITAIN



ATTILA CROSSES THE RHINE
451 GAUL

GAUL BREAKS AWAY FROM ROME
260-274 GAUL

BATTLE OF ARGENTORATUM
357 STRASBOURG, FRANCE

RADAGAIUS INVADES ITALY
405-406 NORTHERN ITALY

EXECUTION OF STILICHO
408 RAVENNA, ITALY

FALL OF CARTHAGE TO VANDALS
439 CARTHAGE (MODERN TUNISIA)

3 BATTLE OF THE FRIGIDUS 394

Eastern Roman forces under Emperor Theodosius defeat those of the western usurper Eugenius. The damage done to the Western Roman army, however, leaves it incapable of stopping later barbarian invasions.

4 THE SACK OF ROME 410

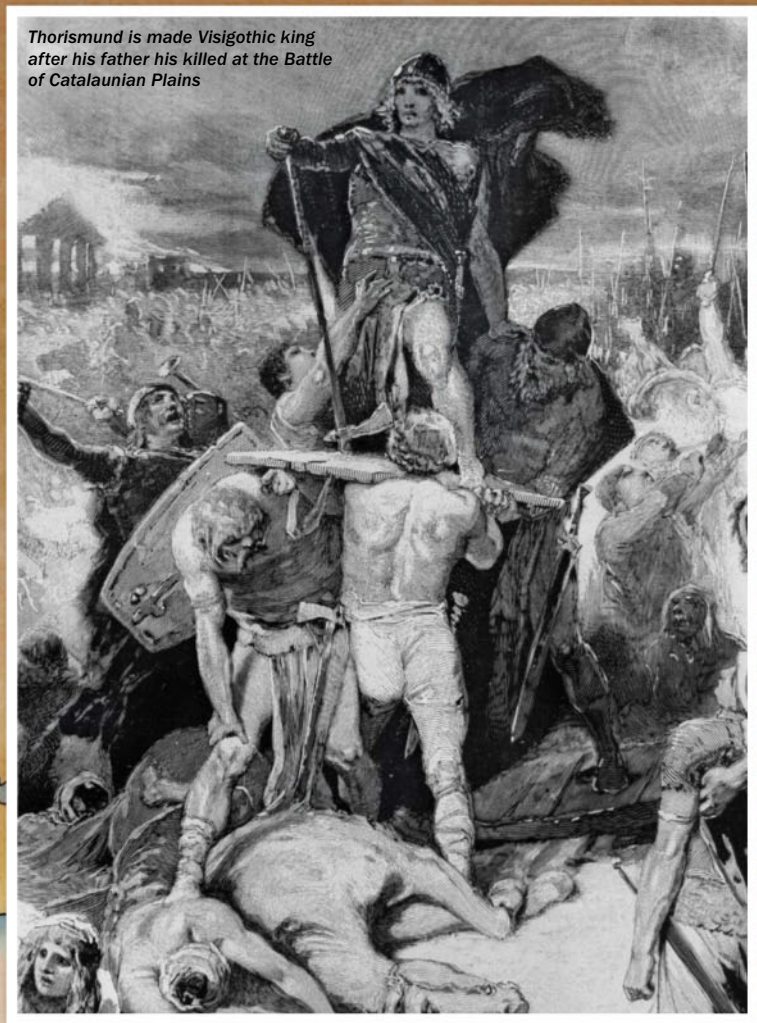
Alaric the Visigoth sacks Rome. Though no longer the imperial capital, the prestige of the city is still so great that the fall causes psychological shockwaves across the empire.

5 AFRICA INVADED 429

80,000 Vandals cross from Spain to Africa and begin a bloody conquest of the province. Carthage falls in 439 and Vandal pirates become the terror of the Mediterranean.

6 BATTLE OF THE CATALAUNIAN PLAINS 451

Attila leads his Huns and on a campaign that threatens to dismember the Western Roman Empire. He is stopped by Flavius Aetius in June at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains.



Thorismund is made Visigothic king after his father is killed at the Battle of Catalaunian Plains

DIOCLETIAN DIVIDES EMPIRE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST
293 THROUGH THE ADRIATIC SEA SOUTH TO AFRICA

HUNNIC INVASIONS BEGIN
370s SOUTHERN RUSSIA/UKRAINE

ATTILA SOLE RULER OF HUNS
C.444 PANNONIA

BATTLE OF NEDAO
454 PANNONIA

BATTLE OF NAISSUS
268/269 NIŠ, SERBIA

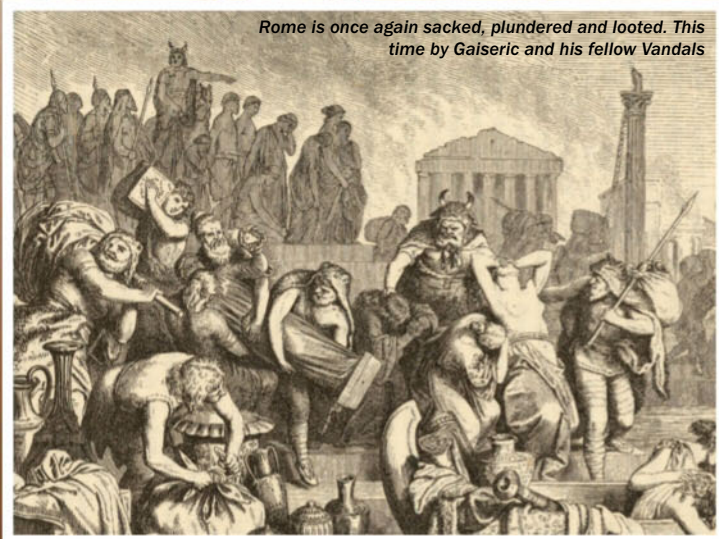
2

“80,000 VANDALS CROSS FROM SPAIN TO AFRICA AND BEGIN A BLOODY CONQUEST OF THE PROVINCE”



EMPEROR VALERIAN CAPTURED BY PERSIANS
260 EDESSA, TURKEY

EMPEROR JULIAN KILLED IN BATTLE WITH PERSIANS
363 SAMARRA, IRAQ



Rome is once again sacked, plundered and looted. This time by Gaiseric and his fellow Vandals

PALMYRA SECEDES FROM ROME
270-273 PALMYRA, SYRIA

7 VANDALS SACK ROME 455

Taking advantage of the weakness of the Western Roman Empire, Gaiseric, king of the Vandals, sails his fleet against the defenceless city of Rome and pillages it for two weeks.

8 BATTLE OF CAP BON 468

A massive, combined imperial fleet drawn from both eastern and western empires is dispatched to crush the Vandals once and for all, but the crafty King Gaiseric uses fire ships to destroy it.

Images: Alamy, Getty, Thinkstock



'BARBARIANS RISING'

THE END OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



Dr Steve Kershaw of Oxford University discusses how the barbarians finally brought the Romans to their knees

The fall of the Western Roman Empire is one of the most significant events in history and ushered in the Dark Ages across Europe. As part of the History Channel's brand-new docu-drama series *Barbarians Rising*, expert contributor Dr Steve Kershaw explains how various barbarian groups nibbled away at Roman supremacy until the empire was a husk of its former self.

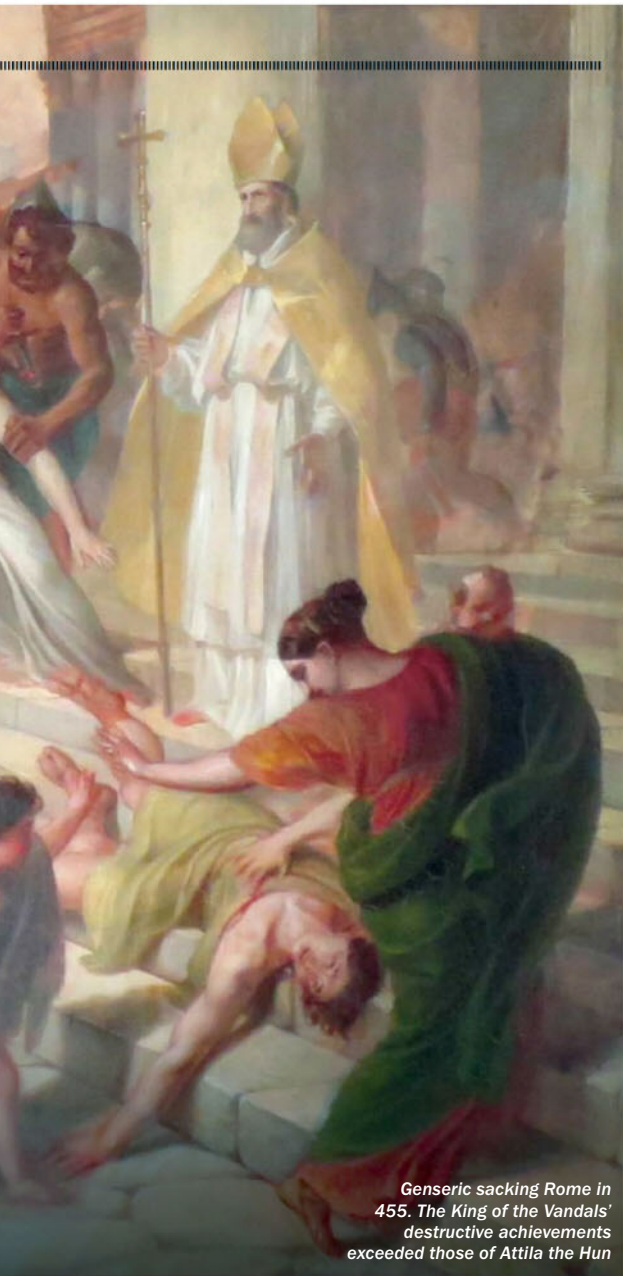
WHAT WAS THE CONDITION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIANS IN THE LATTER PART OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE'S HISTORY?

In a sense, it is the same as it ever was. On the one hand, you've got peaceful co-existence,

trade and mutual benefits. The Romans still view the barbarians as they did in previous centuries, but there are now pressures coming from outside the empire – particularly from the Danube and Rhine regions – that the empire hasn't seen on this scale and persistence before. There is a more difficult situation to deal with on the northern frontiers, which are very long. The Romans find it hard to cope with and there are barbarians wanting to come into the empire for a variety of reasons. One could say that Rome was lucky for a very long time, in that it didn't have to face particular threats from the north, but now in the later period this is a new challenge, and rising to it was something that the Romans found difficult and ultimately failed at.

TO WHAT EXTENT DID FRITIGERN'S GOTHIC VICTORY AT THE BATTLE OF ADRIANOPOLE IN 378 MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE?

It is a very, very significant moment in Roman history without question. A number of historians certainly see it as a major turning point because thereafter, you end up with a whole load of Goths inside the borders of the Roman Empire, in a way that they haven't been before. You've also had a major defeat of a Roman army where an emperor died in battle, and the knock-on effects are that within around 35 years, Rome is sacked by Goths, so it is quite a major moment.



Genseric sacking Rome in 455. The King of the Vandals' destructive achievements exceeded those of Attila the Hun

“THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ATTLA THE HUN IS OVERRATED, HE HAS THIS REPUTATION THAT GOES BEYOND THE DESTRUCTION HE ACTUALLY CAUSED”

WHAT TACTICS AND STRATEGIES DID THE BARBARIANS USE IN ORDER TO INFLICT DEFEATS ON THE ROMANS?

Each individual barbarian group has its own specialist troops and tactics. For instance, the Huns are phenomenal archers, who are incredibly mobile. They live on the backs of horses so they can attack and disappear out of nowhere. One of the Goths' key tactics is to make a huge circle of their wagons and use them like mobile forts. Each group uses its own tactics to suit their military capabilities.

They also rely on speed; surprise and mobility make it difficult for the Romans to catch them. In fact, this made the Late Roman military arrangements move towards a much greater flexibility, not just trying to shut out the frontiers but to have bases behind them from where you could operate fast moving forces to deal with incursions as they occurred.

ATTLA THE HUN IS PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS 'BARBARIAN' IN HISTORY, BUT IS HIS FEARSOME REPUTATION FULLY DESERVED CONSIDERING THAT HE NEVER CAPTURED EITHER ROME OR CONSTANTINOPLE?

That's right. There is a sense in which Attila the Hun is overrated, he has this reputation that goes beyond the destruction he actually caused. Much of it was psychological and we get part of our opinion and view of the Huns from one of the great Late Roman historians called Ammianus Marcellinus. There are some definitive passages in his work that talk about the Huns and how unbelievably horrific, scary, unpredictable and barbarous they are, but when you look at Attila's specific achievements, they're not that impressive. He's defeated, or at least fought to a standstill, at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains and doesn't sack Rome. He sacks other places, and there are archaeological evidences of burnings, but in terms of, '...putting Rome to the sword', he's not as big in doing that as the popular imagination would have you believe.

TO WHAT EXTENT DID GENSERIC, KING OF THE VANDALS PRECIPITATE THE COLLAPSE OF ROMAN POWER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND NORTH AFRICA?

Where Attila has this huge reputation but less of an impact, Genseric has perhaps less of a reputation but more of an impact. Here is someone who does sack Rome and he does it fully in a proper barbarian way. He leads the Vandals out of Spain into North Africa, which is crucial because North Africa is a major grain supplier to Rome. He sacks really big important cities, Hippo and Carthage, which is the great

Roman centre in the region, so his activities are very significant. I think he's a much more important player than Attila because he does much more damage. What Genseric doesn't have is a historian of quality that will give him a fearsome reputation.

HOW DID THE FIRST KING OF ITALY, ODOACER, USE HIS MILITARY SKILLS TO DEPOSE THE LAST WESTERN ROMAN EMPEROR, ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS?

The bottom line is he didn't have to do that much. By 476, the actual territory ruled by Romulus Augustulus was tiny. Essentially what Odoacer did was engineer a coup by ousting Romulus's father Orestes. Odoacer was a military officer and the upshot was that the emperor's father ended up dead.

Romulus Augustulus himself was so weak that they didn't even think he was worth killing. He was just put under house arrest, given an allowance and possibly ended up in a monastery. That's how weak we're talking, and the irony is that the name 'Romulus' was the name of the founder of Rome and 'Augustulus' means 'Little Augustus' after the first emperor. The empire finishes on a whimper, whereas I think people would like it to end with a bang. The Byzantines in the east have another 1,000 years to go but the Western Roman Empire is so weak that it only needs a show of force from Odoacer to finish it. Romulus Augustulus is almost an irrelevance. When Odoacer took over, he didn't even bother to call himself emperor - 'king' was fine for him. The world had really, really changed.

Below: Despite failing to take Rome, Attila still possesses a fearsome reputation, though this anachronistic depiction doesn't reflect it



H WATCH BARBARIANS RISING EXCLUSIVELY ON THE HISTORY CHANNEL, EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 10PM



FALL OF THE WEST, SURVIVAL OF THE EAST

Why a barbarised Roman army partly doomed the Western Empire and how the east managed to delay its downfall

© Jose Cabrera

The story of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire is one that is well-known, and is traditionally dated to 476 when Rome's last emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by his warlord, the barbarian Odoacer. Often overlooked is the survival of the Eastern Roman Empire, a polity that would continue on thriving until 1453, when its capital of Constantinople fell to the forces of the Ottoman Turks. The Eastern Empire weathered the barbarian invasions of the 4th and 5th centuries and, in the 6th century, launched a counterattack under Emperor Justinian that saw

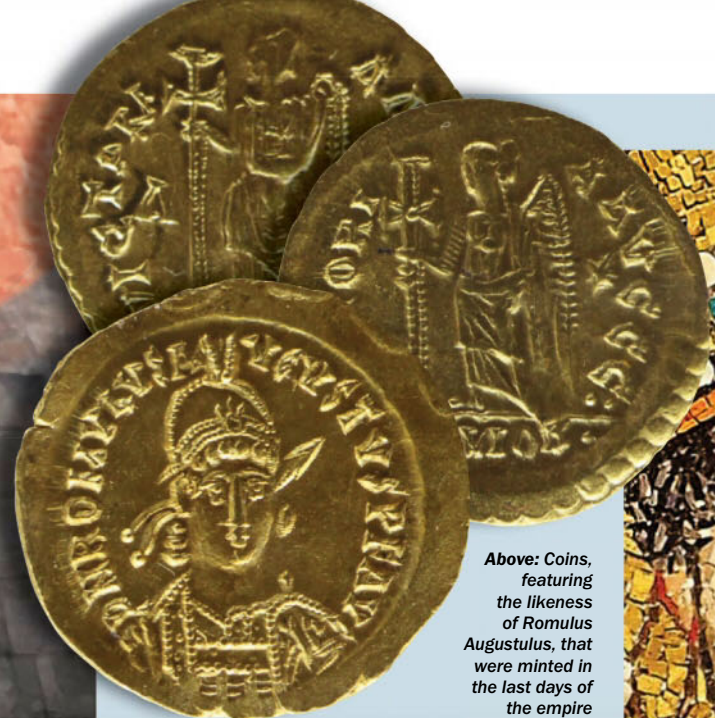
much lost imperial territory in Africa, Spain, and Italy recovered.

So, why were the fates of the eastern and western halves of the empire so different? On the surface, it appears that the west should instead have survived, while the east fell. The west generally produced more and more

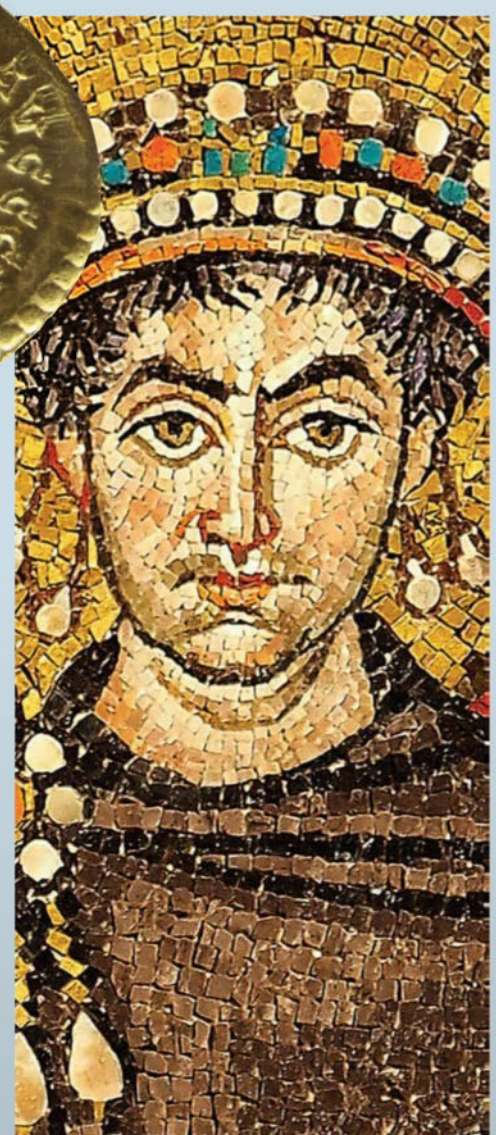
effective soldiers, whereas the population of the east was largely urban and peaceful. One of the great advantages of the east, however, lay in its wealth. The eastern provinces of the empire, tied into the lucrative trading networks of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, were generally more prosperous than those of the west and

“IF ONE OVERRIDING FACTOR MAY BE SAID TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE, IT WAS THE INCORPORATION OF BARBARIANS INTO THE ARMY”

“CONSTANTINOPLE ITSELF WAS VIRTUALLY IMPREGNABLE BEHIND ITS HIGH WALLS AND WAS BEYOND THE MEANS OF THE BARBARIANS TO CAPTURE, UNSKILLED AS THEY WERE IN SOPHISTICATED SIEGE TECHNIQUES”



Above: Coins, featuring the likeness of Romulus Augustulus, that were minted in the last days of the empire



Above: Emperor Justinian oversaw a period of Eastern Roman resistance to barbarian incursions



An Ostrogothic army attempts to oust the Eastern Roman general Belisarius from the walls of Rome, c. 537

If one overriding factor may be said to have contributed to the fall of the Western Roman Empire, it was the incorporation of barbarians into the army and the deterioration in Roman military power that this entailed. Both east and west experienced this phenomenon, but the east was able to overcome the problem posed by barbarisation, while the west never solved it. Non-Romans from beyond the frontiers – barbarians, less politely – had long been recruited and their performance typically had been good. So many barbarians had entered the ranks of the Late Roman army by the 4th century that it had adopted the *barritus*, the barbarian battle cry, as its own. But these men, when inducted into the army, had been made subject to stern Roman discipline and trained to fight as a Roman soldier would.

This all changed for the worse in the aftermath of the dreadful Battle of Adrianople in 378. With an entire Roman field army smashed by the Visigoths and desperate for troops to restore a measure of security to the tottering empire, Emperor Theodosius I made a fatal bargain. He recruited large numbers of barbarian soldiers, especially Goths, into the army as whole tribal groups and allowed them to serve under their native commanders. These federates, as they were known, could fight well at times, but were prone to rebel when they were unsatisfied. One of the most prominent of these tribal commanders, Alaric of the Visigoths, had been a general under Theodosius. This did not prevent him from later making war on the western emperor, Honorius, Theodosius's son, and sacking Rome in 410.

The influx of large numbers of barbarian troops into the army not only 'barbarised' it in character, it also weakened it as a fighting force. The barbarians were never trained to the same standard as traditional Roman troops had been and were poorly disciplined. In battle, therefore, they were not only inferior to how trained Roman soldiers would have performed, but these forces were also no better than the barbarians they were tasked with fighting.

While in the west over-mighty barbarian generals such as Stilicho increased in power, the Eastern Empire resolved the challenge that was posed by barbarian soldiers in the bloodiest way possible. In 400 CE, the people

of Constantinople rose up against the Gothic soldiery in the capital and massacred all of them and their families. From then on, the Eastern Empire relied more heavily on native Roman troops from Asia Minor to provide its defence. Attempts by barbarian leaders, such as Alaric, to extract concessions from the Eastern Imperial Court were rejected and so they too travelled west to see what they could pry loose from the less resolute Western Empire. In short, the strength of the east acted as a goad to get more barbarian interlopers to move westward.

The Western Empire could not muster the power to either regain lost provinces occupied by barbarian invaders or rid itself of the barbarian generals and their personal troops, which it relied on for its uncertain defence in the imperial twilight of the 5th century. The Romans, in time, became little better than spectators to the wars fought for control of the west. When the German general Odoacer deposed Romulus Augustulus, he sent the imperial regalia to Constantinople, saying that there was no more need for an emperor in the west. It was a stark, but also frank, assertion by him of where the real power actually resided in the west – in the hands of a barbarian warlord.

this ensured that a more substantial tax revenue flowed to the eastern imperial treasury, which could then be spent on imperial defence.

The east also benefited from the stout defences of its capital of Constantinople and other cities. Constantinople itself was virtually impregnable behind its high walls and was beyond the means of the barbarians to capture, unskilled as they were in sophisticated siege techniques. A more secure Eastern Empire was better able to resist the depredations of barbarian marauders with the troops at its disposal. Invaders often sought easier pickings in the less well-protected provinces of the west.

IN THE RANKS

In Rome's twilight, many kinds of warriors battled for supremacy, or merely survival

Most warriors of the 5th century, whether fighting for or against Rome, would have been of barbarian origin, with the bulk drawn from the Germanic tribes living east of the Rhine and north of the Danube. Foremost among the migrating tribes were the Goths and the Franks. Opposing them were the Roman cavalryman and infantryman, the final products of the once glorious Roman army.

This Visigoth warrior is shown here as one might have appeared at the Catalaunian Plains, wearing a spangenhelm-style helmet, while his tunic is the green and red commonly associated with the Goths. The most common weapon wielded by a Goth was a short spear, but shorter javelins (angon) might be carried too. At his side he wears an iron longsword

GOTH WARRIOR


OF ALL ROME'S BARBARIAN ENEMIES, THE GOTH'S WOULD HAVE THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECTS, SACKING ROME AND LATER FOUNDED SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS OF THEIR OWN IN GAUL, SPAIN AND ITALY

Divided into a western branch – the Visigoths – and an eastern branch – the Ostrogoths – Gothic warriors would both serve in Roman armies and be counted among Rome's staunchest foes. By the time they crossed the Danube to escape the Huns further east, the Goths were largely Christian, albeit of the Arian form deemed heretical by most orthodox Romans.

It was the Visigoths who smashed an Eastern Roman army at Adrianople in 378, leaving the empire bereft of troops, but it was also the western branch that fought alongside the Romans against Attila's Huns at the climactic Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451.

"IT WAS THE VISIGOTHS WHO SMASHED AN EASTERN ROMAN ARMY AT ADRIANOPE IN 378, LEAVING THE EMPIRE BEREFT OF TROOPS"





The Frankish military was an amalgamation of Germanic tribal customs and more-modern Roman military tactics

FRANKISH INFANTRY

THE FRANKS HAD LONG BEEN FOES OF ROME ALONG THE NORTHERN RHINE, BUT BY THE 5TH CENTURY THEY HAD LOST NONE OF THEIR FEROCITY. IN TIME, THEY WOULD SETTLE IN GAUL AND GIVE THEIR NAME TO A NEW NATION – FRANCE

In 9 CE, the ancestors of the Franks had annihilated a Roman army in the Teutoburg Forest. In Rome's waning years, these tribes had coalesced into the much larger and even more formidable confederation of the Franks, who dominated the heavily forested lands east of the northern Rhine. Possessing few horses, the Franks fought almost entirely as infantry. Their favoured weapons were the francisca, a light throwing axe, and the angon, a barbed javelin.

The francisca, akin to the Native American tomahawk, could either be hurled at an opponent or used in hand-to-hand combat. The angon, a javelin with a barbed head and lengthy iron neck, resembled the Romans' own pilum.

“POSSESSING FEW HORSES, THE FRANKS FOUGHT ALMOST ENTIRELY AS INFANTRY. THEIR FAVOURED WEAPONS WERE THE FRANCISCA, A LIGHT THROWING AXE, AND THE ANGON, A BARBED JAVELIN”



LATE-ROMAN CATAPHRACT CAVALRYMAN (5TH CENTURY)

THE HEAVILY ARMoured ROMAN CAVALRYMAN WAS THE ELITE MOUNTED WARRIOR OF LATE ROME'S ARMIES

Cavalry grew in importance during Rome's later centuries and formed an shock unit in the imperial army. The cataphract, a heavily armed and armoured horseman, was among the elite troops in the army. He wears a long coat of iron mail over his tunic and an enclosed helmet to protect from upward thrusts by men on foot.

His main weapon was the contus, a long lance wielded with two hands. Atop his horse, with a four-horned saddle for stability, his charge would have been devastating. As a sidearm, Roman cavalryman carried the spatha, a two-edged longsword suitable for thrusting and cutting.

Cataphracts could also utilise missile weapons like bows and darts to soften up enemies before a charge

“THE CATAPHRACT, A HEAVILY ARMED AND ARMoured HORSEMAN, WAS AMONG THE ELITE TROOPS IN THE ARMY”

BATTLE OF THE CATALAUNIAN PLAINS 20 JUNE 451

A Roman-barbarian alliance engages in a desperate battle with the Huns to decide the fate of the Western Roman Empire

Attila unified the Huns under his sole kingship in c. 444, and set his sights on conquering the ailing Western Roman Empire. Having crossed the Rhine and moved deep into Gaul in June 451, Attila was besieging Orléans when he learned that a large army under Roman warlord Flavius Aetius was approaching. He broke off the siege, but Aetius's combined Roman-barbarian army caught him at the Catalaunian Plains, somewhere in the vicinity of modern Troyes. The stage was set for one of the last great battles of antiquity.

“THEODORIC IS THROWN FROM HIS HORSE AND EITHER TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY HIS OWN TROOPS OR SKEWERED BY A SPEAR”

1. HUNS ARRIVE FOR BATTLE

Attila draws up his army for battle. He positions his Hunnic troops in the centre of his line, with the subject Gepids on his right wing and the Ostrogoths on his left.

2. ROMAN FORCES PREPARE

Against these, Aetius arrays his Roman troops on his own left and deploys the allied Visigoths opposite the Ostrogoths on his right. In the centre of his line he places the Alans, since their king, Sangiban, is of dubious loyalty.

3. ATTACK ON THE RIDGE

The battle opens in the morning of 20 June as Thorismund, son of old King Theodoric, leads his Visigothic cavalry and clears a force of Huns from the high ground of Montgueux Ridge.

4. FIERCE HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

The rival armies collide, with the Huns showering the Roman line with arrows, seeking to cause it to break. However, most of Attila's troops would have fought as infantry and a fierce hand-to-hand fight ensues.

5. THEODORIC MEETS HIS END

The Romans and Visigoths on the wings stand firm, but the Alans in the centre give way, while the Visigoths on the Roman right battle furiously with the Ostrogoths. Theodoric is thrown from his horse and either trampled underfoot by his own troops or skewered by a spear.

6. THORISMUND LEADS A CHARGE

The Visigoths rally despite the death of their king. Thorismund leads a charge against the Huns that takes them in the flank and drives them from the field. Bloodied and battered, Attila retreats and seeks refuge in his encampment as night falls.

7. ATTLA PREPARES FOR THE WORST

The next day, expecting to be attacked by the Romans and the Visigoths, Attila builds a funeral pyre fully intending to throw himself on it, rather than be taken alive.

“ATTLA BUILDS A FUNERAL PYRE FULLY INTENDING TO THROW HIMSELF ON IT”

8. NEW KING OF THE VISIGOTHS

Fearful of unchecked Visigothic power if the Huns are annihilated, Aetius thinks better of attacking them. He convinces young Thorismund to instead return home and secure his claim to the kingship of the Visigoths now that his father is dead.

9. PLAGUE HALTS INVASION OF ITALY

Attila is allowed to depart from the battlefield, leaves Gaul and returns to Pannonia. He invades Italy next year but is forced to leave the peninsula when his army is stricken by plague.

WHERE WAS THE BATTLE FOUGHT? GENERATIONS OF SCHOLARS HAVE PUZZLED OVER THE PRECISE LOCATION OF THE CATALAUNIAN PLAINS. NOW, WE MAY HAVE AN ANSWER



It might seem odd that the exact location of such a fateful battle as the one fought at the Catalaunian Plains is not certain. For many years, an alternative name for the engagement was the Battle of Châlons, after the city of Châlons-en-Champagne in north east France, but not everyone was convinced that the battle was fought so close to the city, which itself lies nearly 80 kilometres from Troyes.

One of the foremost ancient writers on the battle, the Goth Jordanes, gave it an additional name as well and for a long time it has also been known as the Battle of Campus Mauriacus. In the 19th century, it was discovered that the area of Montgueux was known as ‘Les Maures.’ Was this a link to Mauriacus that had survived the centuries?

Another anonymous ancient historian located the battle site just eight kilometres from the city of Troyes, which also lies in the Champagne region. That would seem to dovetail with Montgueux. Another link may be found in the description of the ridge that lay not far from the main battlefield. Before the battle started, Thorismund's Visigoths chased the Huns off a piece of high ground. Montgueux Ridge overlooks the flat plains below and is the perfect candidate for the heights described by Jordanes, above where the battle was fought.

Left: Die Hunnenschlacht, as painted by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, shows the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains. The image shows warriors continuing to fight as they ascend to the afterlife

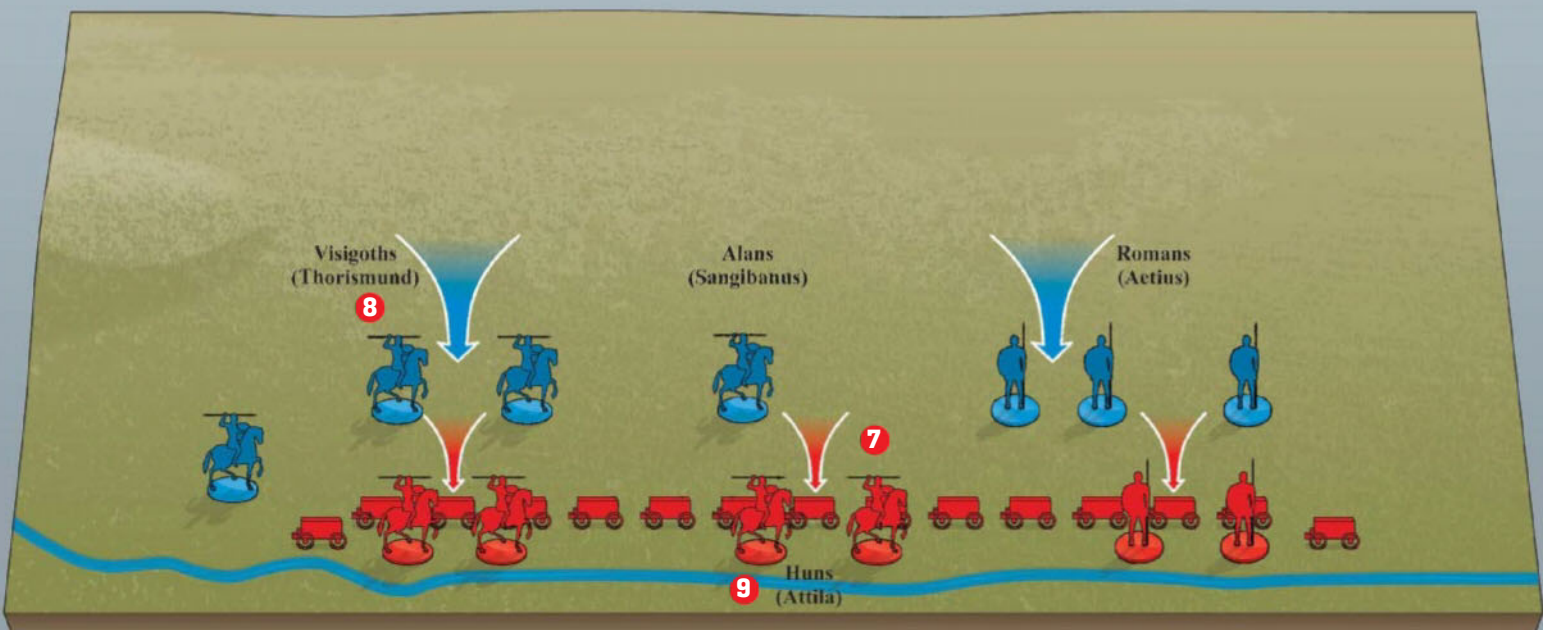
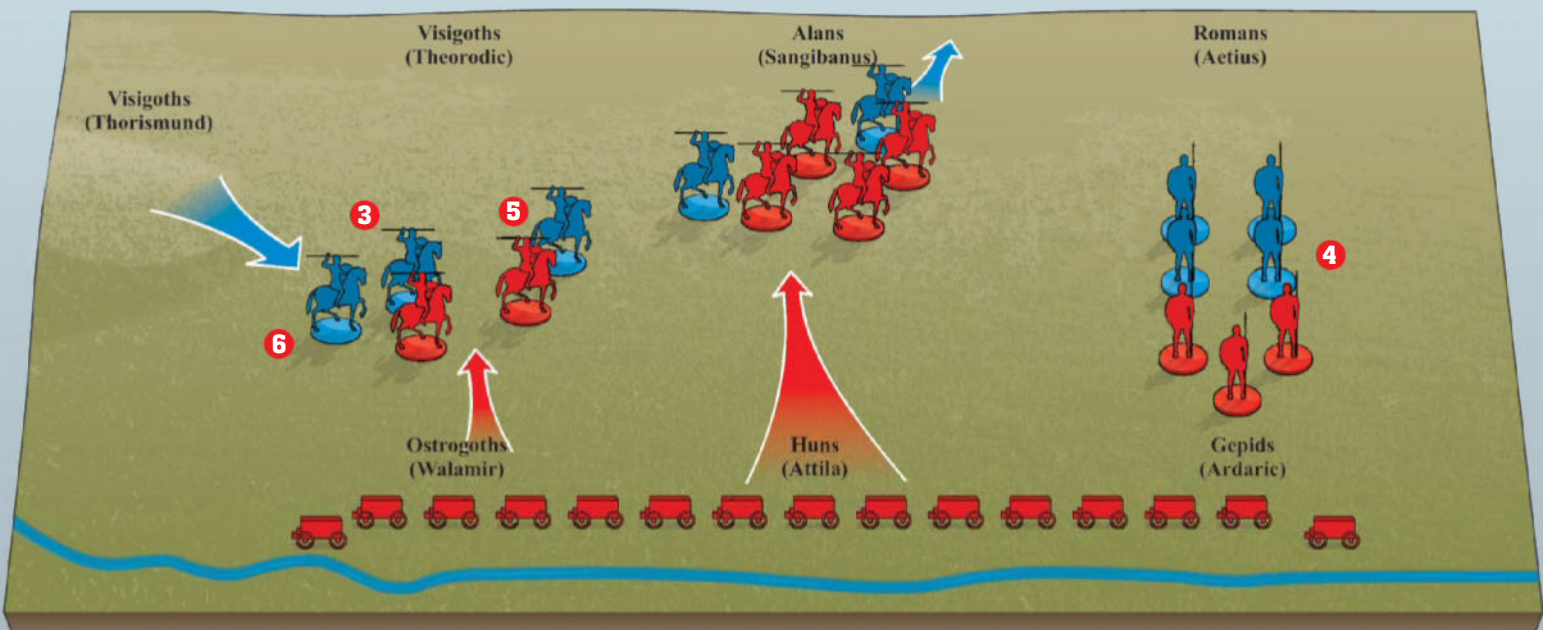
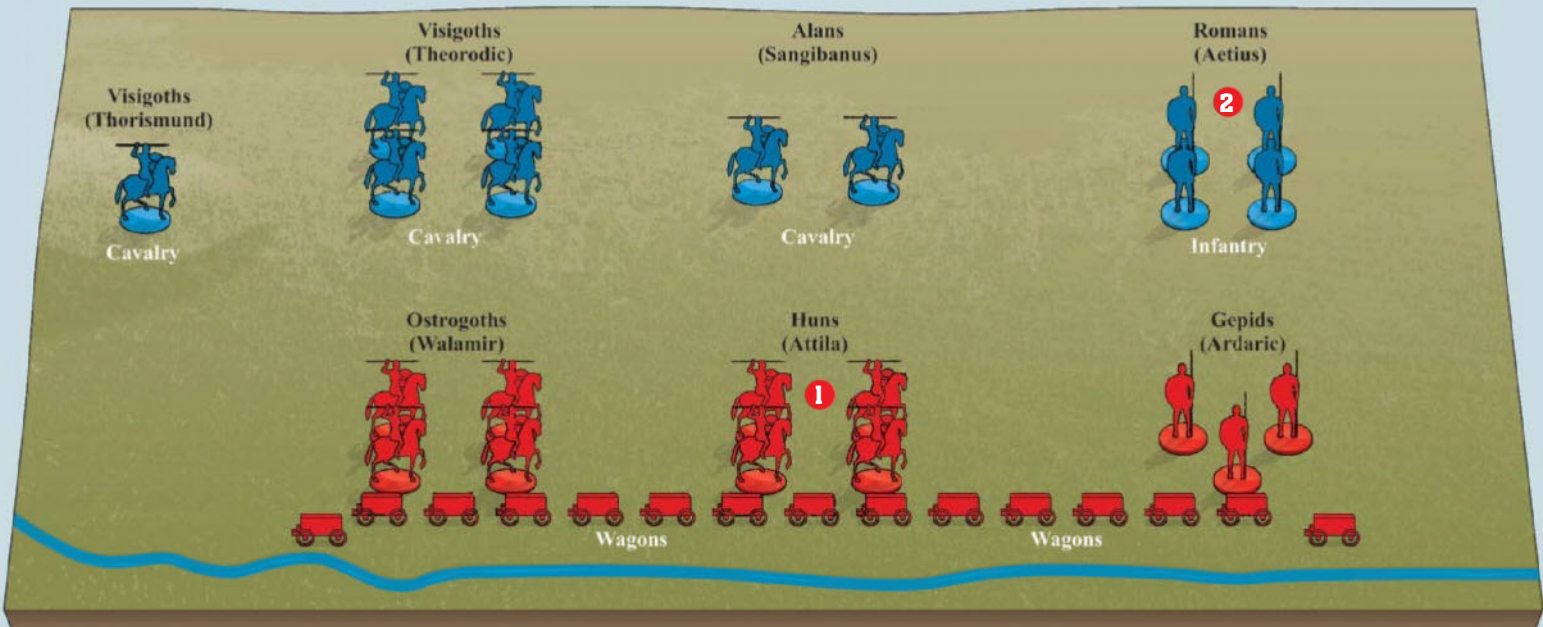


Illustration: The Art Agency

HEAD TO HEAD

The clash of the Late-Roman infantryman with the Hunnic horse archer pitted Roman training and discipline against the Hun's speed and firepower

LATE-ROMAN INFANTRYMAN

RANGE

Compared to the Hun, a Roman soldier carried much shorter-ranged spears, javelins and lead-weighted darts. He might cast a javelin up to 30 metres, but in this area, the Hun out-matched him.

MOBILITY

As infantry, the Late Roman soldier was much slower than the mounted Hun. It was therefore imperative that the Roman never break ranks, or else he would be cut down.

TRAINING

Training and discipline had declined since Rome's glory days. The Romans still fought in ranks, and if they held their nerve and didn't run, they could hold off the enemy.

ARMOUR

The Late Roman soldier wore a light and resilient mail shirt and iron helmet. For additional protection in battle, he would also carry an oval wooden shield.

TACTICS

In battle, the Romans would form a shield wall and stand their ground using spears and javelins to stave off enemy cavalry. If the Roman infantrymen held their nerve, they would probably win.

TOTAL



RANGE

The Hunnic warrior carried a composite bow – a powerful and compact weapon deadly out to 100 metres. With it he could unleash a storm of arrows while on horseback.

MOBILITY

His tough steppe horse gave the Hunnic archer much more mobility than the foot-slogging Roman infantryman. A Hunnic warrior would often take along several spare animals to ride when one tired.

TRAINING

Every Hun was a born rider and had learned to accurately shoot a bow from horseback at a very early age, but overall he was less disciplined than a Late Roman infantryman.

TOTAL



ARMOUR

The Hunnic horse archer used scant body defences, typically carrying only a small shield. While some might have picked up scavenged Roman armour, most would have worn just a leather jacket and cap.

TACTICS

The Huns relied on speed above all else, galloping towards an enemy and launching accurate volleys of arrows to break their ranks.

Right: The Huns were expert horsemen, spending their entire lives in the saddle

Left: Late-Roman infantryman bore little resemblance to a traditional Roman soldier

“IF THE ROMAN INFANTRYMEN HELD THEIR NERVE, THEY WOULD PROBABLY WIN”

COMPOSITE BOW

The Hun's most distinguishing feature was his primary weapon, the composite bow. As its name suggests, the bow was composed of different materials. Its core was wood; the inside was glued horn, to better resist compression; while the outer part of the bow was covered in sinew, to resist tension. With a heavy draw weight for its size, when released, the bow snapped back into its original form with tremendous force. Armed with a composite bow, the Hun atop his horse was an unrivalled combination of firepower and mobility.





BRING THE FIRST TANK TO LIFE WITH TANK 100

Wargaming launches a free AR/VR app to commemorate a century since the tank first entered battle in World War I

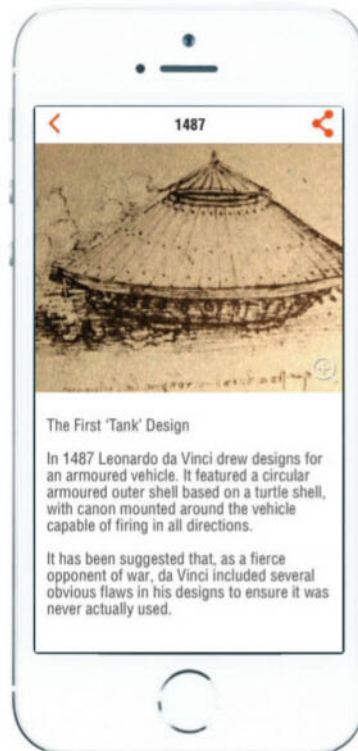
Wargaming, the creators of the massively multiplayer online game *World Of Tanks*, have released a new augmented and virtual-reality app to honour the first use of Britain's secret WWI weapon, the Mark I tank. The tank roared onto the battlefield on 15 September 1916, in the third month of the bloody Battle of the Somme.

Available for free on iOS and Android devices, *Tank 100* lets the user discover life-size AR Mark I tanks in towns and cities across the UK, view stunning 360 degree VR films of tanks in action, and uncover the fascinating history of armoured warfare and mechanical innovation in partnership with The Tank Museum, Bovington.

Tank 100 won't end with the Somme centenary, and further updates promise to expand the range of tanks, mark anniversaries and even allow the user to take control of the tank themselves.



What are you waiting for? Use the QR code to download the *Tank 100* from the App Store.



100 YEARS OF TANKS Tank 100 features

TANKS NOW
Use AR to place a 3D tank on screen. Resize and orientate it to fit to create your own real-world Mark I cameo that you can save and share.

TANK HUNTER
Discover 3D tanks dotted around the UK's towns and cities. Use AR to view the tank full size and unlock additional video content, such as a 360 interior view that can be paired with Google Cardboard for a fully immersive experience.

AR TANK TRIGGER
An image or QR code can be used to trigger a 3D tank on any surface.

FIND OUT MORE

VILLERS-BOCAGE

The village of Villers-Bocage still lies in ruins months after the fierce clash, October 1944



VILLERS-BOCAGE

With a beachhead in occupied France established, Allied and German forces made a desperate scramble to grab strategic positions that saw opposing armoured divisions forming the tips of the spears

NORMANDY, FRANCE 13 JUNE 1944

As Allied forces stormed ashore along the Norman coast of France on 6 June 1944, all ready to begin the arduous campaign to liberate Western Europe from Nazi occupation during World War II, the primary D-Day objective of the British 3rd Infantry Division was the port of Caen.

As one of the largest cities in Normandy, Caen was a communications hub at the

centre of a major road network, connected to the English Channel through a canal. Its seizure would anchor the left flank of the Allied perimeter and deny the defending Germans the advantage of the river and canal, which would otherwise present major obstacles to inland expansion of the D-Day beachhead.

General Bernard Law Montgomery, commander of Allied ground forces in Normandy, envisioned the capture of Caen within hours of British ground forces storming ashore at Sword Beach, the easternmost of the five D-Day landing beaches. However,

stiff German resistance from the veteran 21st Panzer Division, the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend and the 716th Infantry Division had stymied progress towards the city and with that, Montgomery's belief that it could be captured on D-Day proved overly optimistic.

A week after the Normandy landings, Allied troops were slugging their way inland against fierce German opposition, but Caen remained firmly under enemy control despite numerous efforts by British forces to take the city in a direct assault. For Montgomery though, an opportunity had developed, as the US 1st Infantry Division pushed southward from



Omaha Beach, compelling German forces to retreat and opening a gap west of Caen between the 352nd Infantry Division and Panzer Lehr, a crack German armoured division.

Operation Perch

Montgomery’s staff altered Operation Perch – its plan for the early ground phase of the Normandy Campaign – hoping to take advantage of the recent development in the enemy’s front line. A pincer movement might outflank Panzer Lehr and envelop Caen, forcing its stubborn German defenders to retire or risk being surrounded. While the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division attacked in the east, the 7th Armoured Division – the “Desert Rats”, who had achieved fame with Montgomery’s Eighth Army in North Africa – was to swing south-eastward and capture the town of Villers-Bocage, just more than 27 kilometres southwest of Caen, along with nearby high ground identified on maps as Point 213.

On 10 June, the refocused Operation Perch commenced with the advance of the 7th Armoured Division, while the 51st (Highland) Division stepped off the next day. Although some initial gains were made east of Caen, a powerful counterattack from 21st Panzer stopped that British thrust cold, eventually

forcing the Highlanders to retire to the banks of the Orne. Still, the prospects for the western pincer’s success remained.

As the 7th Armoured Division advanced, Major General Fritz Bayerlein – the capable commander of Panzer Lehr – realised the predicament his division faced and ordered a ferocious counterattack that bogged the western drive down around the village of Tilly-sur-Seulles. On the morning of 12 June, Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey, commander of the British Second Army, travelled to 7th Armoured headquarters to meet with Major General George ‘Bobby’ Erskine, the division commander, who suggested that Panzer Lehr might still be outflanked if 7th Armoured disengaged from the fight at Tilly-sur-Seulles and struck toward Villers-Bocage from further west.

Rolling towards Villers-Bocage

Within hours, the 22nd Armoured Brigade – the vanguard of the Desert Rats – was on the move toward Villers-Bocage with the tanks and armoured cars of the 8th and 11th Hussars covering its flanks. As darkness fell around them, Brigadier Robert ‘Looney’ Hinde, leading, called a halt to the advance after reaching the Caumont-Villers-Bocage road, just eight kilometres from his objective. Early on the

morning of 13 June, tanks of the 4th County of London Yeomanry and troops of Company A, 1st Battalion, The Rifle Brigade, rolled into Villers-Bocage against only token resistance. French civilians turned out in large numbers to welcome them.

Wary of the fact that a German counterattack was likely, since control of the road network emanating from Villers-Bocage was tactically significant for the Germans as well, Brigadier Hinde ordered the tanks of A Squadron, County of London Yeomanry and Company A, The Rifle Brigade, to occupy Point 213. About 1.6 kilometres north west of Villers-Bocage, the high ground commanded the approaches to the town and National Highway 175 toward Caen.

Although his tankers were exhilarated by the rapid run to Villers-Bocage, Lieutenant Colonel Viscount Arthur Cranley, commanding the 4th County of London Yeomanry, was worried. German reconnaissance vehicles had been spotted and enemy soldiers were seen making a hasty getaway in a staff car. Soon enough, the enemy would be coming back and occupying Point 213 would invite a counterattack against the exposed position.

Nevertheless, Cranley left four tanks of his regimental headquarters in Villers-Bocage before hurrying off to take stock of A Squadron’s new posting. B Squadron was positioned to the west of the town, guarding the intersection along the road that led to the village of Caumont.

Just after 9am, the leading elements of the 4th County of London Yeomanry and the accompanying infantry reached Point 213. The bulk of the British armour and infantry halted along the road, awaiting orders for deployment

“ALTHOUGH HIS TANKERS WERE EXHILARATED BY THE RAPID RUN TO VILLERS-BOCAGE, LIEUTENANT COLONEL VISCOUNT ARTHUR CRANLEY, COMMANDING THE 4TH COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY, WAS WORRIED”





A Waffen SS MG42 and Panther tank take up defensive positions around Caen, ready to repel the allied advance, 1944

Right: German reinforcements race towards Normandy in an attempt to bolster the coastal defences against the anticipated invasion



OPPOSING FORCES

	vs	
<p>BRITISH ARMY 22ND ARMoured BRIGADE</p> <p>LEADER Brigadier Robert 'Looney' Hinde</p> <p>INFANTRY 1/7th Battalion Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey); 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade</p> <p>ARMOUR 4th County of London Yeomanry; 5th Royal Tank Regiment</p>	<p>GERMAN ARMY SS HEAVY TANK BATTALION 101</p> <p>LEADERS SS Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel) Heinz von Westerhagen</p> <p>ARMOR 1st Panzer Company, SS Hauptsturmführer (captain) Rolf Möbius; 2nd Panzer Company, SS Obersturmführer (1st lieutenant) Michael Wittmann</p>	

to consolidate their hold on the high ground. More than two dozen tanks and halftracks lined the road, along with numerous troop carriers. Sentries were posted but their field of vision was limited due to the terrain and thick woods in the area.

Tigers unleashed

In the wake of the D-Day landings, the relative few German panzer formations in Normandy were alerted. One of these, the 1st SS Panzer Corps, had started towards the fighting early on 7 June. Ravaged by Allied fighter-bombers along

the route, the corps lost a significant number of armoured vehicles, and by the morning of 13 June, SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101, its last uncommitted reserve advancing from Beauvais, had been reduced from an original strength of 45 tanks to fewer than 20.

Most of the German armoured battalion's vehicles, however, were the 56-ton Tiger I heavy tank, mounting a high-velocity 88mm cannon that was superior to the 75mm and 17-pounder (76mm) guns of the new British Cromwell and Sherman Firefly tanks in the field. Although plagued by mechanical difficulties, the Tiger was a daunting foe in combat. Hits from Allied shells were often deflected harmlessly away by its thick armour plating, and the range of the formidable 88mm weapon allowed the Germans to engage enemy targets at standoff distances.

On that morning, two companies of Tigers from SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101 had reached the vicinity of Villers-Bocage. The 1st Company was under SS Hauptsturmführer (captain) Rolf Möbius, and the 2nd Company was led by Obersturmführer (first lieutenant) Michael Wittmann. Already a leading panzer ace and holder of the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves, Wittmann had well over 100 kills on the Eastern Front to his credit. Accounts vary as to the actual strength of the two panzer companies and the details of the engagement that followed.

Right: A Tiger tank lies abandoned after being taken out of action during the battle – evidence against the supposed invincibility of this model

However, the ensuing battle contributed to the growing legend that was Obersturmführer Michael Wittmann – possibly even exaggerating his role in the fight for Villers-Bocage.

Wittmann's Tiger company had taken positions along a ridge south of Point 213, to offer support to either Panzer Lehr or the 12th SS Panzer Division. The young Tiger ace was astonished when British armoured vehicles appeared throughout Villers-Bocage. He later recalled: "I had no time to assemble my



company; instead I had to act quickly, as I had to assume that the enemy had already spotted me and would destroy me where I stood. I set off with one tank and passed the order to the others not to retreat a single step but to hold their ground."

Just as the British tankers and infantrymen on the road to Point 213 were ordered to resume their advance to the high ground, three Tiger tanks, those of Wittmann, SS Oberscharführer (company sergeant major) Jürgen Brandt and SS Untersturmführer (2nd lieutenant) Georg Hantusch, were seen advancing parallel to the British column along a path adjacent to the highway but screened by a tall hedgerow. Apparently, the two other German tankers had moved forward with Wittmann, despite his order for them to remain where they were.

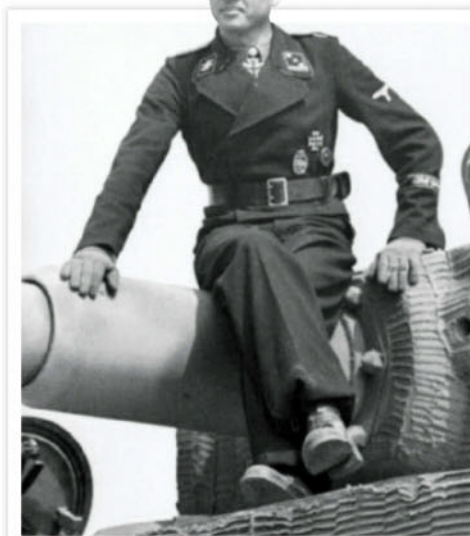
As the other two Tigers attacked the British armour at Point 213, Wittmann emerged from a wooded area onto National Highway 175, where he destroyed a Cromwell at close range and then blasted a Sherman Firefly, its blazing hulk blocking the British column. He turned and worked his way down the line of armoured vehicles strung out along the road. In short order, the Tiger's 88mm gun and its two 7.92mm MG 34 machine guns destroyed eight halftracks and four troop carriers.

Struggle in the streets

Leaving a trail of destruction on the highway, Wittmann then rolled down the Rue Georges Clémenceau towards the eastern edge of Villers-Bocage. Three M5 Stuart light tanks of the 4th County of London Yeomanry Reconnaissance Troop, their 37mm guns no match for the thick armour protecting the Tiger, were stationed at the intersection with the road to Tilly-sur-Seulles.

No doubt, the reconnaissance squadron leader, Lieutenant Rex Ingram, knew that his situation was perilous. Nevertheless, he ordered the driver of his 15-ton Stuart into the road – directly in the path of Wittmann's oncoming Tiger – in an attempt to delay the German tank's advance into the town. A single 88mm round caused the British tank to erupt in flames. The Tiger shunted the blazing wreck aside and blasted at least one more of the light tanks.

SS Obersturmführer Michael Wittmann strikes a jaunty pose atop his Tiger tank



03 END RUN TO VILLERS-BOCAGE

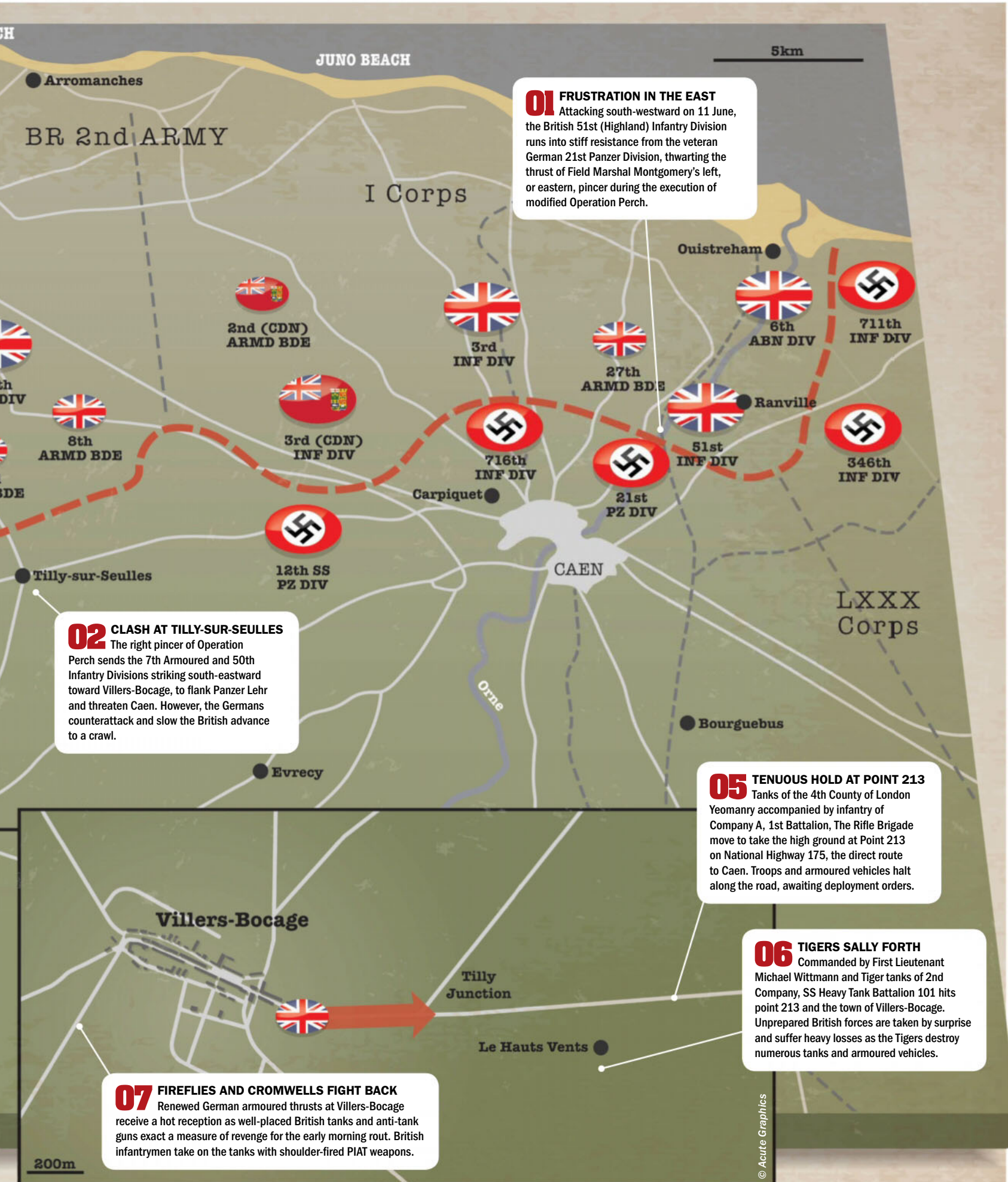
With the 22nd Armoured Brigade in the lead, the 7th Armoured Division sidles out of the line at Tully-sur-Seulles and races toward Villers-Bocage to re-energise the British effort to flank Panzer Lehr and eventually drive on Caen.

04 RUSH THROUGH FRANCE

Elements of the 22nd Armoured Brigade brush aside light enemy resistance and cover the distance to Villers-Bocage in a matter of hours. The swift movement through a stretch of open country boosts morale among the British troops after hard fighting in the hedgerow, or bocage, country of France.

08 THE BRITISH BACK AWAY

Continuing pressure from German forces and the inability of the 50th Infantry Division to come to the aid of 7th Armoured doom Operation Perch and the reach for Villers-Bocage to failure. British forces reluctantly withdraw.



01 FRUSTRATION IN THE EAST
 Attacking south-westward on 11 June, the British 51st (Highland) Infantry Division runs into stiff resistance from the veteran German 21st Panzer Division, thwarting the thrust of Field Marshal Montgomery's left, or eastern, pincer during the execution of modified Operation Perch.

02 CLASH AT TILLY-SUR-SEULLES
 The right pincer of Operation Perch sends the 7th Armoured and 50th Infantry Divisions striking south-eastward toward Villers-Bocage, to flank Panzer Lehr and threaten Caen. However, the Germans counterattack and slow the British advance to a crawl.

05 TENUOUS HOLD AT POINT 213
 Tanks of the 4th County of London Yeomanry accompanied by infantry of Company A, 1st Battalion, The Rifle Brigade move to take the high ground at Point 213 on National Highway 175, the direct route to Caen. Troops and armoured vehicles halt along the road, awaiting deployment orders.

06 TIGERS SALLY FORTH
 Commanded by First Lieutenant Michael Wittmann and Tiger tanks of 2nd Company, SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101 hits point 213 and the town of Villers-Bocage. Unprepared British forces are taken by surprise and suffer heavy losses as the Tigers destroy numerous tanks and armoured vehicles.

07 FIREFLIES AND CROMWELLS FIGHT BACK
 Renewed German armoured thrusts at Villers-Bocage receive a hot reception as well-placed British tanks and anti-tank guns exact a measure of revenge for the early morning rout. British infantrymen take on the tanks with shoulder-fired PIAT weapons.

© Acute Graphics

Wittmann then directed his lumbering Tiger down the main thoroughfare in Villers-Bocage and a few yards beyond the road junction, the four Cromwells of the regimental headquarters came into view. Apparently, several of the crewmen were actually outside of their vehicles when the encounter began. The first Cromwell, commanded by the regimental executive officer, Major Arthur Carr, was damaged and attempted to back out of the line of fire. Two more British tanks, under Lieutenant John L Cloudsley-Thompson and Regimental Sergeant Major Gerald Holloway, were both destroyed.

As Cloudsley-Thompson's crew bailed out of its burning Cromwell, Captain Pat Dyas, the regimental adjutant, reversed his tank and backed ponderously into a garden, obscured from Wittmann's view. The action had developed so rapidly that Dyas's gunner, away from the vehicle on a nature call, had no time to return to the tank. Positioned for a killing shot, Dyas was powerless to act as the big Tiger rumbled past, its broadside completely exposed to him.

Continuing down the Rue Georges Clémenceau, Wittmann spotted two observation post tanks of the 5th Royal Horse Artillery as they tried to avoid contact, backing around a corner into the Rue Pasteur. Due to its observation role, the Sherman commanded by Major Dennis Wells was quite defenceless, mounting a wooden decoy gun rather than a real main weapon; the Cromwell was most likely unarmed as well. Captain Paddy Victory continued backing his Cromwell into a side street behind the Sherman at the rear entrance to the Hotel du Bras d'Or. A moment later, Wells's tank was blown up by an 88mm shell from Wittmann's Tiger.

Captain Victory tried to escape, but his transmission gears locked up. As Wittmann passed by, the Cromwell crew grasped a fleeting hope that they had remained unseen. But the Tiger stopped, reversed for a moment, then pumped a round into the British tank just below its turret. The crew bailed out, but Captain Victory returned to the disabled Cromwell and destroyed its interior best that he could before slipping away.

While Wittmann shot up these British tanks and moved steadily westward towards the centre of Villers-Bocage, Lieutenant Charles Pearce escaped from the area in a scout car and alerted B Squadron to the presence of the marauding Tiger on the other side of the town. After winning a momentary reprieve, Captain Dyas began tracking Wittmann through the streets of Villers-Bocage.

“CAPTAIN VICTORY TRIED TO ESCAPE, BUT HIS TRANSMISSION GEARS LOCKED UP. AS WITTMANN PASSED BY, THE CROMWELL CREW GRASPED A FLEETING HOPE THAT THEY HAD REMAINED UNSEEN”

As Dyas followed his Tiger, Wittmann ran into a Sherman Firefly of B Squadron under the direction of Sergeant Stan Lockwood. Lockwood was the first British tanker to hear Lieutenant Pearce's alarm; he turned his Firefly from the Place Jeanne d'Arc onto the Rue Georges Clémenceau and got the drop on Wittmann, firing a 17-pounder shell that inflicted slight damage on the big Tiger. In turn, Wittmann swerved into a brick wall causing it to collapse on top of Lockwood's Sherman.

Captain Dyas sensed an opportunity, rolling his Cromwell forward and firing two 75mm rounds that hit the Tiger, but failed to penetrate its armour. In seconds the tables were turned. The Tiger's turret swung around, its cannon belched flame and the resulting hit killed the Cromwell gunner and driver while blowing Dyas clear – stunned but remarkably uninjured.

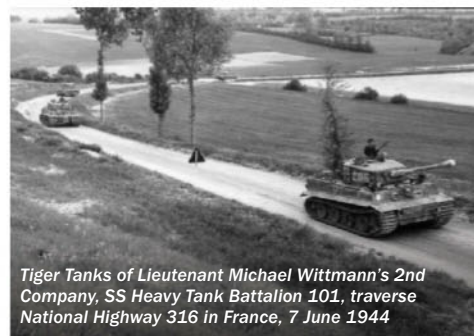
Wittmann knew that other B Squadron tanks were closing in. He turned back down the Rue Georges Clémenceau and proceeded only a few yards before the crash of a shell caused the Tiger to lurch to a halt in front of the Huet-Godefroy clothing store. A single round from a six-pounder anti-tank gun had accomplished what numerous British tanks had failed to do. Fired from an alley between the Rue Jeanne Bacon and Boulevard Joffre, the anti-tank round disabled a drive sprocket. Wittmann and his crew abandoned their Tiger, expecting that it might be recovered later and made their way seven kilometres to Panzer Lehr headquarters at Chateau d'Orbois, where Wittmann described the situation around Villers-Bocage to the officers present.

Chaos at Point 213

While Wittmann was devastating the British armour in Villers-Bocage, Brandt and Hantusch drove on to Point 213 and added to the carnage. Within the hour, a third Tiger, commanded by Unterscharführer Kurt Sowa, joined the assault and by 10am, reconnaissance troops and armoured vehicles of the 4th Panzer Company, SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101 reached the one-sided battle. Half an hour later, the Germans were rounding up scores of prisoners and consolidating their hold on National Highway 175 between Villers-Bocage and Point 213.

The morning action ended with a staggering tally of destruction. 20 Cromwells, four Sherman Fireflies and three Stuart tanks were thought to have been destroyed, along with numerous troop carriers and other vehicles. The Fireflies of B Squadron, 4th County of London Yeomanry prepared for a renewed battle that would surely come, while the 1/7th Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment also occupied positions in Villers-Bocage. Anti-tank guns studded the British defensive cordon.

Despite their losses, the British still menaced the flank of Panzer Lehr and there was hope at the headquarters of the 7th Armoured Division and its parent XXX Corps that the 50th Infantry Division might break through at Tilly-sur-Seulles and support the drive through Villers-Bocage and perhaps even to Caen. However, the vigour of the morning Tiger assault had shattered the spearhead of the British offensive and the initiative lay squarely with the Germans, who sensed the potential for a solid local victory.



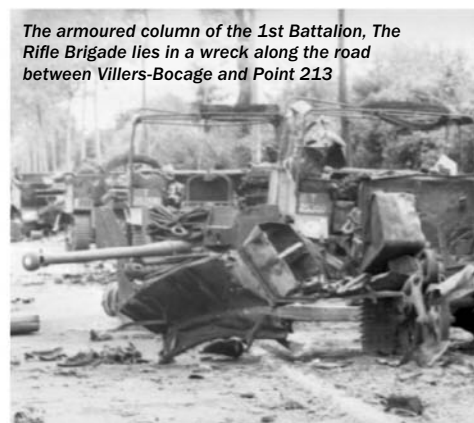
Tiger Tanks of Lieutenant Michael Wittmann's 2nd Company, SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101, traverse National Highway 316 in France, 7 June 1944



Its hatches thrown open, a destroyed PzKpfw IV tank of Panzer Lehr sits amid the rubble in Villers-Bocage



Captain Victory's Cromwell was immobilised when attacked by Wittmann's Tiger tank



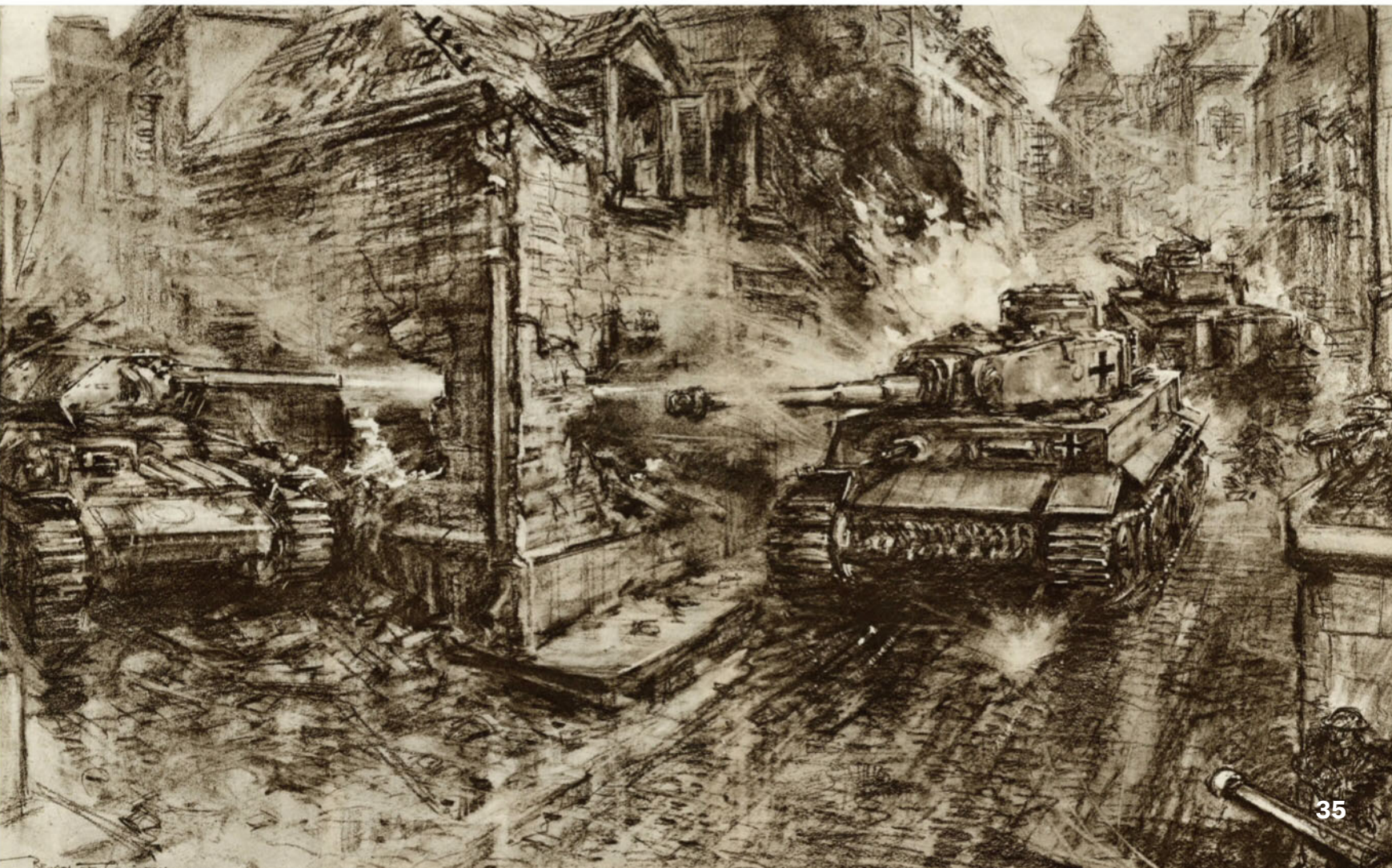
The armoured column of the 1st Battalion, The Rifle Brigade lies in a wreck along the road between Villers-Bocage and Point 213



The blackened hulk of a Cromwell tank, one of more than 30 British armoured vehicles lost at Villers-Bocage, rests abandoned

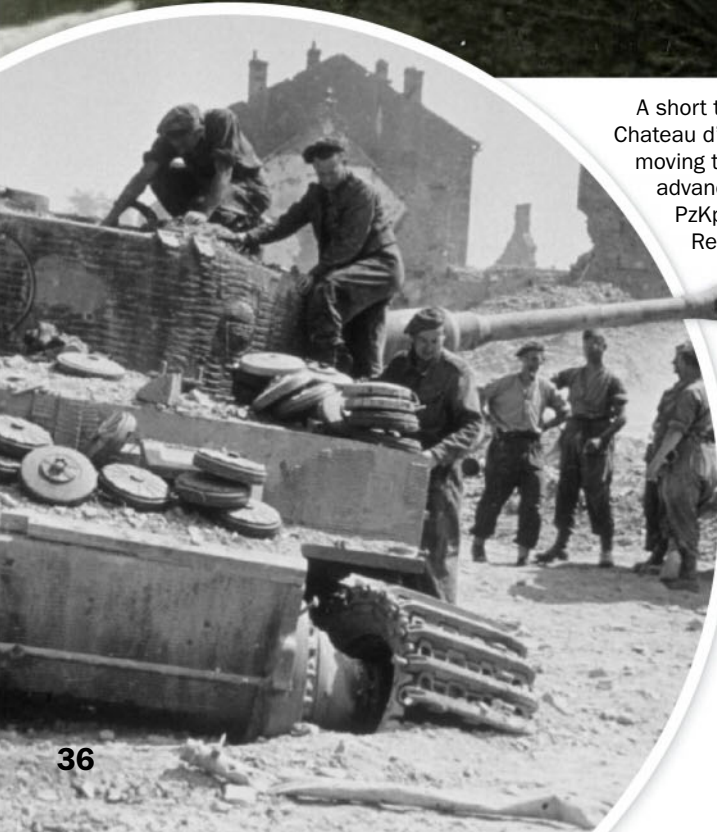
Below: An artist's impression of the battle from the London Illustrated News. The British tank pictured is an older design, possibly a Covenanter

“THE TIGER’S TURRET SWUNG AROUND, ITS CANNON BELCHED FLAME AND THE RESULTING HIT KILLED THE CROMWELL GUNNER AND DRIVER”





Below: After recapturing the town in August, British engineers fill a Tiger with land mines to destroy it



A short time after Wittmann's arrival at Chateau d'Orbois, Captain Helmut Ritgen was moving to block potential British routes of advance north of Villers-Bocage, with 15 PzKpfw IV tanks of the 2nd Battalion, Regiment 130, Panzer Lehr. Ritgen soon ran into some intense fire from concealed anti-tank guns, lost one PzKpfw IV and was ordered to regroup near Villers-Bocage. Subsequently, he sent four tanks roaring in from the south, while ten more renewed their advance along Rue Georges Clémenceau, the British claimed

a pair of PzKpfw IVs. Around 1pm, Panzer Lehr's armour tried to take the town again, losing two more PzKpfw IVs in the process.

The 1/7th Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment held the railway station and other key positions in and around Villers-Bocage and put up stiff resistance. British and German infantrymen fought street-to-street and house-to-house, before the defenders pulled back to positions along the edge of town. A British roadblock in the centre of Villers-Bocage concealed several six-pounder anti-tank guns, at least one Sherman Firefly and several Cromwells, which lay in wait for any German tanks advancing towards the town square.

“BRITISH AND GERMAN INFANTRYMEN FOUGHT STREET-TO-STREET AND HOUSE-TO-HOUSE, BEFORE THE DEFENDERS PULLED BACK TO POSITIONS ALONG THE EDGE OF TOWN”

An Allied Sherman recovery tank towing a crippled Sherman behind it during the Battle of Caen

Right: The lightning fast advance of the Germans on the morning of 13 June led some British tanks, like this Cromwell, to be abandoned

“BOTH SENIOR COMMANDERS SEEMED UNCHARACTERISTICALLY DETACHED, FAILING TO ASSERT STRONG LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING DURING THE FIGHT”

from the Wild West. One of these Tigers fell victim to an anti-tank gun, while an infantryman destroyed another with a PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank) spring-loaded, shoulder-fired weapon. Another second shot from a PIAT disabled the last of this Tiger trio.

Yet another Tiger, its commander well aware of the commotion to his front, stopped short of the British trap in the town square and waited. An opportunistic Firefly crew took a shot at the Tiger through the windows of a corner building and the round glanced off the German tank's gun mantlet. The Tiger began to churn down the street as its driver accelerated. A Cromwell emerged from behind, killing the behemoth with a shot to its vulnerable rear. At the same time, the Firefly that had spooked the Tiger blasted another PzKpfw IV.

Meanwhile, outside the city limits other units of the 7th Armoured Division repulsed German attacks along a north-south line in the vicinity of Amaye-sur-Seulles and Tracy-Bocage.

Although some historians have disputed the presence of elements of the 2nd Panzer Division during the fighting at Villers-Bocage, others assert that as many as two panzergrenadier battalions entered the town on 13 June, pressing the infantry of the 1/7th Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment until the tanks of B Squadron began to cut down German troops in heaps with their machine guns.

Nevertheless, by 6pm the enemy had advanced close to the 1/7th Battalion headquarters and reluctantly, the decision was made to withdraw from the town. Under a covering barrage from the 5th Royal Horse Artillery and the heavy guns of the US V Corps, the British pulled back. The Germans harassed their movement until well after dark.

Overnight, Hinde reinforced a defensive box on high ground at Point 174, 1.6 kilometres west of Villers-Bocage, and Panzer Lehr, along with the few remaining Tigers of SS Heavy Tank Battalion 101, assailed the position the next day. Artillery of the US 1st Infantry Division helped to beat back the initial German thrusts, but simultaneous attacks in the afternoon succeeded in breaching the defensive box and rendering artillery support useless since British and German troops were intermingled. Just as the German assault threatened the 22nd Armoured Brigade headquarters, it was finally beaten back.

Although Hinde remained confident that the 22nd Armoured Brigade could hold its salient at Villers-Bocage, the 50th Division remained tangled with Panzer Lehr, unable to move up in support. Therefore, the 22nd Armoured Brigade was pulled back and consolidated with the Allied line to the north and west, effectively ending the British bid for Villers-Bocage.

In the aftermath of the battle, the capabilities of the British field commanders, including Brigadier Hinde, Major General Erskine and Lieutenant General GC Bucknall commanding XXX Corps, were debated. The tactical deployment of the 22nd Armoured Brigade was questioned and the troops of the 50th Division were not the only potential reinforcements available. None of these commanders made a formal request for support from the 50th Division or any other units that might have intervened.

Equally, Dempsey and Montgomery cannot escape some responsibility. Both senior commanders seemed uncharacteristically detached, failing to assert strong leadership and decision making during the fight. Within weeks of the failed offensive, Hinde, Erskine, and Bucknall were relieved of command. Dempsey later admitted that, "...the whole handling of the battle was a disgrace."

Casualties were substantial on both sides, with 217 British dead and the loss of more than 40 tanks and armoured vehicles. A Squadron, County of London Yeomanry lost all 15 of its Cromwells, Fireflies and Stuarts. As many as 15 German tanks, including six irreplaceable Tigers, were destroyed and although dozens of Germans were killed, the exact number is unknown. British forces hammered away at Caen for two months before capturing the city, and Villers-Bocage remained in German hands until the first week of August. Perhaps the greatest casualty of Operation Perch and the affair at Villers-Bocage was that the chance to race for Caen slipped through British grasp.

FURTHER READING

- ★ DECISION IN NORMANDY BY CARLO D'ESTE
- ★ SIX ARMIES IN NORMANDY BY JOHN KEEGAN
- ★ VILLERS-BOCAGE BY GEORGE FORTY
- ★ VILLERS-BOCAGE: NORMANDY 1944 BY HENRI MARIE

ZULU WW

WORDSTOM GARNER



**“THEY MUST BE THOROUGHLY
CRUSHED TO MAKE THEM BELIEVE IN
OUR SUPERIORITY”**

Lord Chelmsford at the start of the war

WAR

This colonial conflict is mostly remembered for the famous defence of Rorke's Drift, but the war was largely characterised by deadly incompetence that exposed the rotten core of imperialism



During the afternoon of 22 January 1879, a British army officer called Rupert Lonsdale rode his pony towards the well-defended camp of Isandlwana in Zululand, southern Africa. Earlier, he had left the camp with a battalion of troops under commander Lord Chelmsford and was returning to enquire after some rations for his men. He was in for a shock. On his return, he found tents in flames and dead bodies scattered everywhere. Suddenly a figure appeared out of a tent with a bloodstained spear: a Zulu warrior. The Zulus were everywhere, some now wearing the scarlet coats of Lonsdale's dead comrades. Turning his pony and fleeing, he returned to his battalion at 4pm and wearily told Chelmsford: "The Zulus have the camp." The stunned general replied: "But I left 1,000 men to guard the camp." This message was the first news of the worst military disaster to befall the British against a technologically inferior army. It was also a bloody beginning to an infamous colonial conflict: the Anglo-Zulu War.

Colonial arrogance

In the 1870s, Great Britain was at the peak of its global dominance – its might reinforced by commercial, industrial and technological prowess that was projected worldwide by a dominating navy. However, it was not the only imperial power and competed with other European countries to seize land, particularly in the 'scramble for Africa'.

Sir Bartle Frere was high commissioner for southern Africa and was committed to creating a confederation of South African states that would enable Britain to exploit the huge resources of the region. To achieve this, he would have to suppress the powerful Zulu kingdom of King Cetshwayo, who led a disciplined army of 35,000-40,000 warriors. The Zulus had a reputation for martial prowess, but as they were mostly armed with spears and shields, the British considered them to be inferior. Frere regarded black Africans as less "civilised" than Asians and believed that ending their "reign of barbarism" would allow trade and European ways of life to flourish.

Frere appointed Lieutenant-General Frederic Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford, as the new commander-in-chief of British forces in southern Africa. Chelmsford had recently won a minor conflict against the Xhosa tribe and as such, regarded African armies with complacency. Before the war began, he wrote to an administrator: "Half measures do not answer with natives. They must be thoroughly crushed to make them believe in our superiority. I shall strive to show them how hopelessly inferior they are to us in fighting power, altho' numerically stronger." This overconfidence would cost the British dear.

Although poorly armed, the Zulu army was formidable. While the British assumed their enemy would adopt guerrilla tactics, the Zulus fought open warfare and were trained to fix, surround and annihilate enemy forces. Their

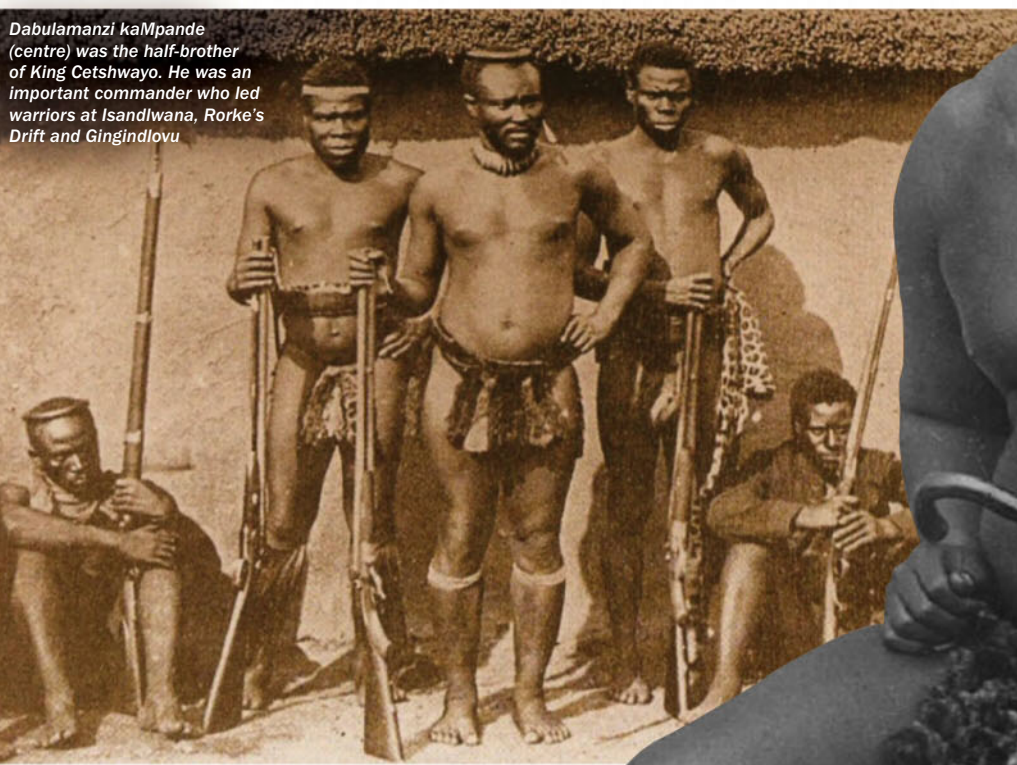
most famous tactic was 'the horns of the buffalo', whereupon warriors formed into the shape of a buffalo's head. The 'horns' (flanks) would encircle and pin the enemy, the 'chest' (centre) would deliver the coup de grace and the 'loins' (reserves) would exploit success or reinforce. Although encircling was by no means a unique tactic, Zulu armies delivered it with great speed and organisation, ever eager to "wash their spears" in the blood of their enemies.

Zulu triumph

In late 1878, Chelmsford was given command of 17,000 men and 20 guns. When he invaded Zululand on 11 January 1879, he divided his force into five columns. Each would advance miles apart, before converging on Cetshwayo's capital of Ulundi. Three of these columns would form the central invasion and of those, it was assumed that number three column would first engage the Zulus. This column crossed the River Buffalo near Rorke's Drift and consisted of 4,700 men (including 1,891 European and 2,400 African troops), more than 2,000 livestock and 302 wagons and carts. Chelmsford accompanied the column and left a small company of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot at the advance base at Rorke's Drift, before making camp near the prominent hill of Isandlwana on 20 January. Meanwhile, Cetshwayo mobilised a Zulu force of 24,000 men and divided it into two, with one heading south and the other towards Chelmsford's force.

"THE ZULU ARMY WAS FORMIDABLE. WHILE THE BRITISH ASSUMED THEIR ENEMY WOULD ADOPT GUERRILLA TACTICS, THE ZULUS FOUGHT OPEN WARFARE AND WERE TRAINED TO FIX, SURROUND AND ANNIHILATE ENEMY FORCES"

Left: Standing 2.03 metres tall and wide of girth, Cetshwayo kaMpande was the imposing king of Zululand. Under his rule, the Zulus won a famous victory against the British at Isandlwana



Dabulamanzi kaMpande (centre) was the half-brother of King Cetshwayo. He was an important commander who led warriors at Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Gingindlovu



22 January 1879

Battle of Isandlwana

IN ONE OF THE BLOODIEST BATTLES OF THE COLONIAL AGE, THE BRITISH ARMY WAS MASSACRED AT THE HANDS OF THE TECHNOLOGICALLY INFERIOR BUT DETERMINED ZULUS

On 20 January, the central column of Lord Chelmsford's invading force into Zululand camped on the slopes of Isandlwana. The next day, a mounted reconnaissance encountered the Zulus in strength, so Chelmsford split his forces and marched out of camp on the morning of 22 January with a battalion, mounted infantry and

artillery. 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot (2nd Warwickshire) under Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pulleine and mounted troops and artillery under Brevet Colonel Anthony Durnford lightly guarded the camp. The British were about to unwittingly encounter a Zulu army that vastly outnumbered them, in their tens of thousands.

“THE BRITISH WERE ABOUT TO UNWITTINGLY ENCOUNTER A ZULU ARMY THAT VASTLY OUTNUMBERED THEM IN THEIR TENS OF THOUSANDS”

01 STUMBLING ACROSS THE ZULUS

Durnford's mounted troops leave the camp to search for the Zulus while the rest of the troops stand down. In the hills to the east of Isandlwana, the horsemen spread out and one troop pursues a party of Zulus before accidentally encountering the entire army. The Zulus immediately charge.

02 HORNS OF THE BUFFALO

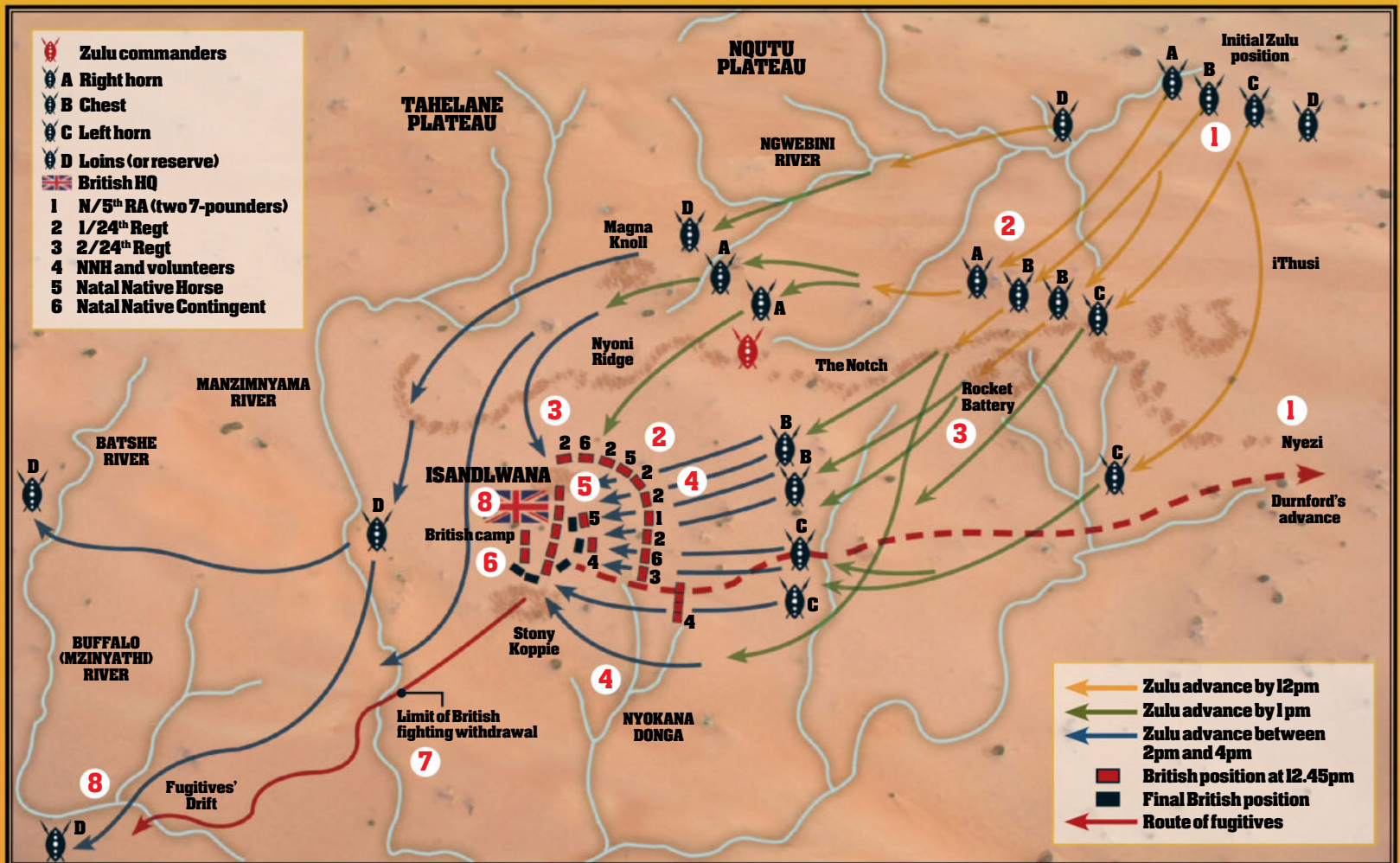
While charging, the Zulu army assembles into its traditional formation, called 'the horns of the buffalo', in some confusion and heads directly to the British camp. One of Durnford's troops rides back and informs Colonel Pulleine that the camp is to be attacked. Pulleine deploys his men to meet the attack on the east side of the camp.

03 ROCKET DESTRUCTION AND INITIAL RETREAT

As the Zulu army advances, it overwhelms Durnford's rocket troop and takes the equipment while the Royal Artillery crews manage to escape. On the British left, two companies with two guns withdraw to the camp, pausing to fire on the enemy as they retreat.

04 VOLLEY FIRE!

The main body of British troops opens fire on the Zulus of the 'chest', who find themselves impeded by gullies. The Zulus go to ground to avoid the volleys but many are killed. Meanwhile, the 'horns' race to envelope the British flanks, with the companies of the 24th Regiment and Natal Native Contingent collapsing on the right.



05 AMMUNITION PROBLEMS

The Zulus infiltrate between the companies of British infantry and Durnford's irregulars, with the men on the extreme right running out of ammunition and riding back into the camp. This exposes the British flank and the Zulu 'chest' now renews its attack and pushes the British back.

06 SLAUGHTER AMONG THE TENTS

The 'horns' break each British flank and the line quickly collapses into the camp. Groups of soldiers, such as Durnford and his Natal Carbineers, form and fight the encroaching Zulus until their ammunition runs out and they are overwhelmed and killed. Colonel Pulleine is also killed around this time.

07 A CHAOTIC ROUT

The Zulu 'horns' do not completely close around the camp and some soldiers manage to make their way towards Rorke's Drift. However, the Zulus cut off the road and the escaping soldiers of the 24th are forced into the hills, where they are killed. Only mounted men are able to escape south west across a river.

08 FINAL POCKETS OF RESISTANCE

A group of about 60 soldiers from the 24th, under Lieutenant Anstey, are cornered on the banks of a tributary river and wiped out. Other small groups of troops are similarly destroyed. The British have been annihilated and the victorious Zulus now ransack the camp and disembowel their defeated enemies.



The battlefield of Isandlwana was photographed months after, when the British returned to bury the dead. Abandoned wagons are still visible in the foreground

“THE FIRST INVASION OF ZULULAND WAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY TORRID AFFAIR AND ASTONISHINGLY, THE BRITISH WOULD CONTINUE TO REPEATEDLY UNDERESTIMATE THE ZULUS AS THE WAR PROGRESSED”



Destruction of the Bonaparte Dynasty

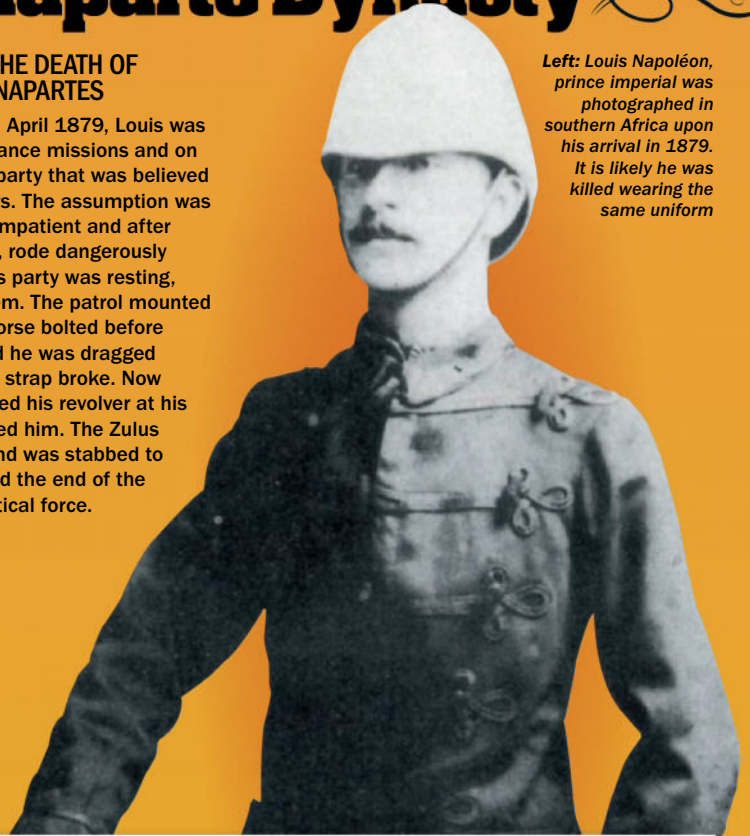
AN UNFORESEEN SIDE EFFECT OF THE ZULU WAR WAS THAT IT CAUSED THE DEATH OF THE HEIR TO THE MOST FAMOUS MARTIAL DYNASTY IN EUROPE: THE BONAPARTES

In 1879, Louis Napoléon, prince imperial, was the former heir to the throne of France. Born in 1856, he was the only son of Emperor Napoleon III and the great-nephew of the legendary Napoleon I. His pampered existence had ended in 1870 when his father lost the Franco-Prussian War and the Bonaparte family was exiled to England. When Napoleon III died in 1873, Louis became the Bonapartists' last hope. Popular with Queen Victoria and eager to continue the martial traditions of his family, Louis joined the British Army and, like his great uncle, trained as an artillery officer. Keen to prove himself as a true Bonaparte in war, he successfully lobbied to serve in southern Africa. In a letter to a friend, Louis wrote: "I am thirsting to smell powder."

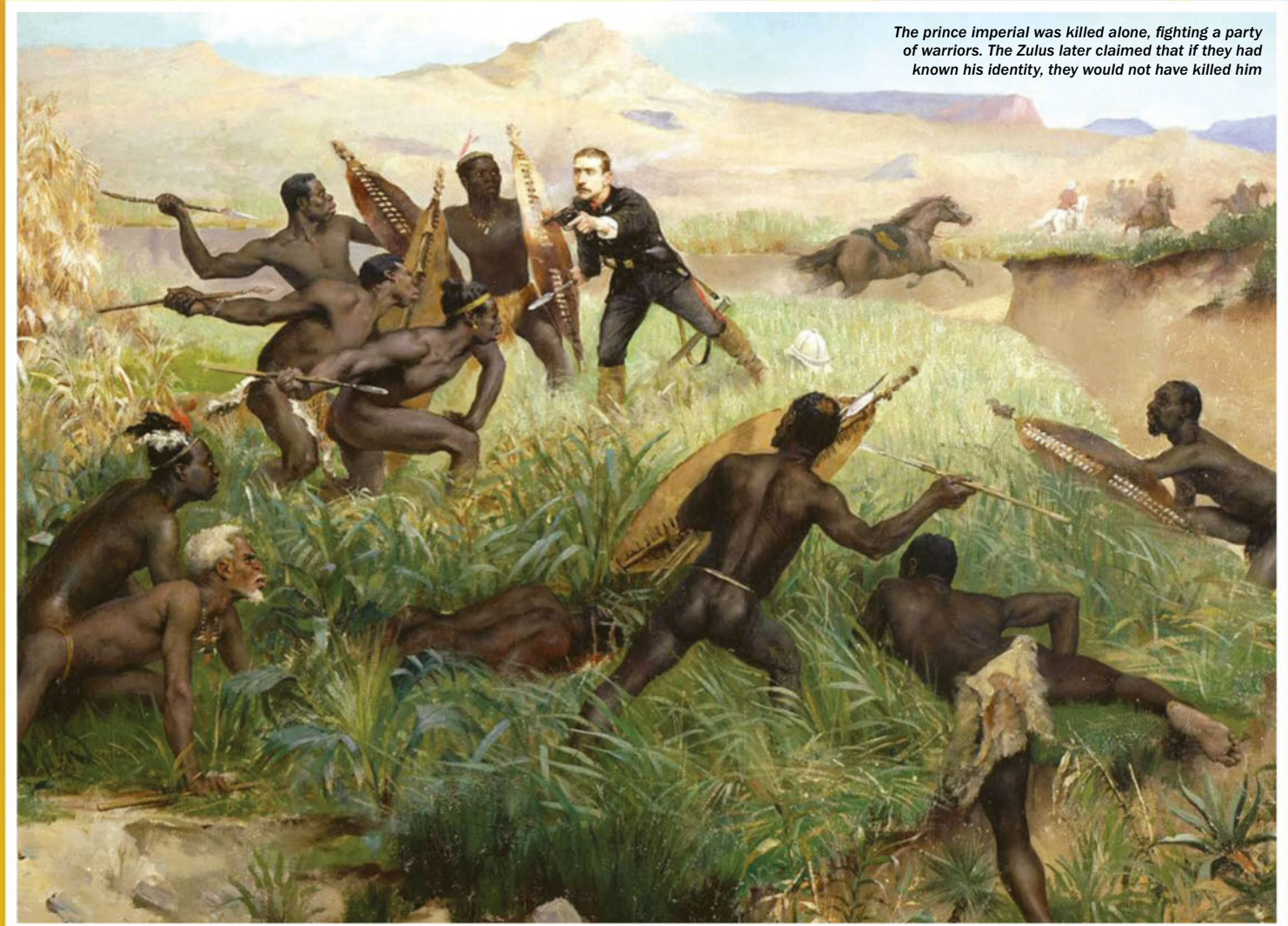
"HIS PAMPERED EXISTENCE HAD ENDED IN 1870 WHEN HIS FATHER LOST THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE BONAPARTE FAMILY WAS EXILED TO ENGLAND. WHEN NAPOLEON III DIED IN 1873, LOUIS BECAME THE BONPARTISTS' LAST HOPE"

After arriving at Durban in April 1879, Louis was allowed to go on reconnaissance missions and on 1 June, he joined a forward party that was believed to be free of Zulu skirmishers. The assumption was tragically wrong. Louis was impatient and after taking temporary command, rode dangerously deep into Zululand. While his party was resting, about 40 Zulus attacked them. The patrol mounted and rode away but Louis's horse bolted before he could mount properly and he was dragged 100 yards before the saddle strap broke. Now abandoned on foot, Louis fired his revolver at his attackers but spears wounded him. The Zulus pursued Louis until he fell and was stabbed to death. Louis's death heralded the end of the Bonaparte dynasty as a political force.

Left: Louis Napoléon, prince imperial was photographed in southern Africa upon his arrival in 1879. It is likely he was killed wearing the same uniform



The prince imperial was killed alone, fighting a party of warriors. The Zulus later claimed that if they had known his identity, they would not have killed him



On 21 January, patrols spotted the Zulu army in great strength and Chelmsford decided to split his forces, taking the 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot, mounted infantry and four guns to meet and defeat the enemy. He left the 1st Battalion, 24th Foot under Colonel Pulleine to guard the camp. In the early morning of 22 January, Chelmsford's force left Isandlwana, but the enemy had disappeared and the 2nd Battalion began to search the hills. The Zulus bypassed Chelmsford and made straight for Isandlwana. At 10am, the camp was reinforced by mounted troops under Colonel Anthony Durnford, but the defences were inadequate. No attempt was made to laager the wagons into a defensive circle and the troops were told to stand down. Lieutenant Curling remembered that, "...not one of us dreamt there was the least bit of danger... our dinner had been cooked and as there seemed no chance of us being attacked, we broke off and went into our tents."

This complacency was shattered with the sudden sound of gunfire. A troop of mounted volunteers had pursued a small party of Zulus, but then stumbled across the entire army. They charged, forming into their buffalo formation as they went. Pulleine was informed and deployed the 1st Battalion in front of the camp at the base of Isandlwana Hill, in lines that would prove to be overstretched. He also sent a brief message to Chelmsford: "Heavy firing to the left of our camp. Cannot move camp at present." After another vague message at 2pm, Chelmsford decided that the camp was not seriously threatened and did not return – but by that time, the situation was irretrievable.

The Zulus first overwhelmed a rocket troop and then advanced towards the 1st Battalion lines. The British opened fire on the 'buffalo's chest', causing many casualties. The Zulu warriors threw themselves on the

ground, diving for cover. It was reported that one Zulu commander exhorted his warriors: "Never did the King give you this command, 'Lie down upon the ground.' Go and toss them into Maritzburg." The Zulus continued to advance despite the heavy fire. Another man, Mehlokazulu, recalled: "They fired so heavily we had to retire. We kept lying down and rising again." Nevertheless, the British were unable to stop the envelopment of the 'horns' as Curling remembered: "The Zulus split up into a large mass of skirmishers that extended as far around the camp as we could see. We could get no idea of their numbers but the hills were black with them."

The Zulus were now infiltrating between the thinly deployed lines and the British were beginning to run out of ammunition. The battle had been raging in front of the camp for 30 minutes and the infantry used up their supplies of 70 rounds per man. Men like Quartermaster Bloomfield of the 24th, who refused to give out ammunition to soldiers from different regiments, did not help the British. Artilleryman Lieutenant Horace Smith-Dorrien remembered Bloomfield's pedantry when he tried to open an ammunition box, "For heaven's sake, don't take that man, it belongs to our battalion." Smith-Dorrien retorted, "Hang it all, you don't want a requisition slip now do you?" The lack of ammunition forced Durnford's mounted men to ride back into the camp, which exposed the British left flank. This encouraged the Zulus of the 'chest' to renew their attack with one warrior recalling, "They all shouted 'uSuthu' and waving their shields, charged the soldiers with great fury."

The British troops fell back on the camp as the 'horns' broke each flank, causing the lines to collapse. Individual groups fought off the enemy until their ammunition eventually ran out

"THE TERRIBLE DISASTER HAS SHAKEN ME TO THE CENTRE"

Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli

and they were cut down. However, the 'horns' did not entirely close the British camp and some mounted soldiers tried to escape towards Rorke's Drift. Curling recalled: "We trotted off, thinking to take up another position but found it in possession of the enemy who were killing the men as they ran out of their tents." Mehlokazulu remembered, "When the soldiers retired from the camp they did so running... things were then getting very mixed and confused... what with the smoke and dust."

The British were defeated. The Zulus chased and killed all they could find. Only 55 Europeans (including five officers) and 350 African auxiliaries survived the carnage. Symbolically, no officer wearing a scarlet tunic survived – Cetshwayo had ordered his warriors to concentrate on the redcoats. The Zulus had killed 1,329 men: 858 British troops (including Pulleine and Durnford) and 471 Africans, although they had actually suffered the greatest losses with about 2,000 dead. Nonetheless, the Zulu victory was decisive and they ritually disembowelled the British dead before ransacking the camp – capturing over 1,000 rifles and 250,000 rounds of ammunition. They left behind a dreadful sight for Chelmsford's returning force in the evening. With his men forced to sleep among the carnage, Chelmsford feared an invasion of British Natal, and then saw smoke rising in the distance from the garrison he had left behind at Rorke's Drift. British arms had been truly chastised.

The successful defence of Rorke's Drift in the immediate aftermath of Isandlwana became, by



Above: British survivors of Rorke's Drift taken a few weeks after the battle. Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead VC is seated in the front row, far left

Right: Frederic Theisiger, Lord Chelmsford was the commander of British armed forces in southern Africa. Although a popular commander, his incompetence led to the humiliating defeat at Isandlwana

far, the most famous battle of the war. About 140 men managed to fend off 3,000-4,000 Zulus in a ferocious battle on 22-23 January, which restored some sense of British martial pride. 11 Victoria Crosses were awarded to the defenders, the most ever received for a single action by one regiment. However, the battle is controversial for several reasons. Many agree the VCs were deserved on their own merits, but it has latterly been argued that the high numbers of medals were awarded partly to distract the British public from the debacle at Isandlwana. Furthermore, the British killed as many as 500 wounded Zulus in cold blood after the battle in revenge. Astonishingly, this would prove to be just the preface of a mismanaged, brutalising campaign, as British commanders repeatedly underestimated their Zulu enemy.

Repeated blunders

When Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli heard about what had happened at Isandlwana, he wrote privately: "The terrible disaster has shaken me to the centre." The shocked British government sent seven regiments of reinforcements to Natal along with two artillery batteries, while Lord Chelmsford returned to lick his wounds.

Over the next two months, preparations were made to build a fresh invasion force, but the British were now wary of Zulu attacks in the disputed territories around the Natal-Zululand border, particularly Boer settlements. One of these was the village of Lûneberg, which was located near Zulu kraals (enclosed villages) and was garrisoned by the British on 15 February. Later in the month, a convoy of 18 supply wagons made the journey there to help reinforce the garrison, but progress was hampered by heavy rain, which caused the River Intombe, along their route, to swell. The commander, Captain David Moriarty, could not ford the river and so they had to wait for a break in the weather.



Above: In March 1879 at the Battle of Intombe, the Zulus once again defeated the British. Far from being a swift war, the conflict became a nightmarish embarrassment

On 11 March, Moriarty split his force in two, placing 35 men on the Lûneberg side of the river, with the remaining 70 on the opposite bank with the laagered wagons. At 5am on 12 March, a sentry saw a huge mass of Zulus silently advancing on the laager. Moriarty ran out of his tent with a revolver but he was mortally wounded by Zulu assegais, crying out to his men, "I am done; fire away boys!" Most of the British troops were speared as they emerged from their tents and the survivors fled towards the river.

On the opposite bank, Colour-Sergeant Anthony Booth tried to provide covering fire, "We kept the fire up for about ten minutes; about 200 Zulus came to our side of the river, and as we saw no more of our men crossing

the river, we commenced firing and retiring." Booth led 40 other survivors and fled for four and a half kilometres, pursued by the Zulus. It was another British humiliation with nearly 80 men killed. The Zulus lost only 30 men and the British embarrassments continued.

In late March, Chelmsford ordered Colonel Evelyn Wood to attack the Zulu stronghold on Hlobane Mountain with irregular mounted troops and companies of the 80th Regiment – a total of nearly 700 men. However, as they advanced towards the mountain, the main Zulu army of 20,000 men was spotted arriving to relieve their besieged comrades. The terrified horsemen began a retreat that quickly turned into a rout as many Zulus engaged them.

The horsemen's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Redvers Buller, was forced to lead his men down a steep slope called the 'Devil's Pass' in order to return safely to the fortified camp of Kambula. Lieutenant Browne recalled: "In a moment, the Zulus were among us in the rocks. How I got down I shall never know." Captain Cecil D'Arcy's horse was wounded, and as he looked up, he heard a scream: "I saw the Zulus right in among the white men, stabbing horses and men. I made a jump and got down somehow and ran as hard as I could." The scattered survivors eventually reached Kambula with the British losing ten officers and 80 European troops, while the casualties of the African levies probably ran into the hundreds.

The British resurgence

The defeat at Hlobane forced the British to strengthen the fortifications at their camp in Kambula, which was garrisoned by 2,086 troops. There were wagon walls reinforced with mealie bags, trenches, an earthwork bastion on a small rise in the middle of the hill and an additional laager to house 2,000 cattle. These precautions ensured that the disaster of Isandlwana would not be repeated. On 29 March, the day after the Hlobane debacle, five huge columns of

The Martini Henry Rifle

THE FAMOUS AND DEADLY WEAPON OF CHOICE FOR BRITISH COLONIAL CONQUESTS

CHAMBER

Inside the chamber there was a tumbler that pivoted on top of the trigger and cocked the mechanism. When the trigger was squeezed, the tumbler was released, which allowed the firing pin to shoot forward and strike the primer.



CARTRIDGE

The .45 brass cartridge contained a heavy lead bullet that was powerful enough to stop a buffalo. Ammunition came in paper packets of ten rounds and each soldier carried 70 rounds on his person.



LEVER

The lever was an innovative design feature that loaded the rifle. It was lowered to empty the chamber and a cartridge was loaded on the exposed breechblock and thumbed home.

The standard British infantry rifle in 1879 was the breech-loading Martini Henry. Although it was not the first rifle of its kind, the Martini Henry was considered to be the first firearm to compare with the longbow of the Hundred Years' War in terms of quickness and efficiency. In expert hands, it was accurate up to 900 metres, with battalion volley fire starting at 550-730 metres. Even an average shot could score hits at 275 metres and its rate of fire was 12 rounds per minute.

BARREL

The barrel was 84 centimetres long and the rifling consisted of a heptagonal barrel with seven grooves. It had one twist in 56 centimetres, which enabled it to be considered a superior firearm.



During the Battle of Ulundi, the Zulu kingdom literally went up in flames as the British set fire to the kraals, that made up the capital of King Cetshwayo

the Zulu army advanced from the south east in the familiar 'horns of the buffalo' formation. Cetshwayo, fearing another Rorke's Drift, later claimed that he gave his commanders strict orders not to attack the camp, but the younger warriors were elated by the success at Hlobane the previous day and prematurely charged, forcing the entire army into the fray.

At 300 yards, the British opened up with rifle and artillery fire as one Zulu warrior remembered: "The bullets from the white men were like hail falling about us. It was fearful, no one could face them without being struck." Despite this failure, the left 'horn' and 'chest' of the buffalo managed to take the cattle laager in a subsequent attack, using captured rifles and forcing Wood to withdraw closer to the fort. However, the British rallied and two companies of the 90th Regiment started firing on Zulus from a hill position.

The enemy attack began to falter and Lieutenant Slade recaptured the cattle kraal, "Sword in hand we went in at the double... and a right royal reception we gave them." Buller's horsemen were then released and the Zulus were slaughtered in a vengeful rout. D'Arcy recalled, "We followed them for 12 kilometres, butchering the brutes all over the place. I told the men, 'No quarter boys and remember yesterday.'" Kambula changed the course of the war and was a reverse Isandlwana. As many as 2,000 Zulus were killed, compared to just 18 British, who had fired an average of 31 rounds per man in a battle that raged for hours.

On the same day as Kambula, Chelmsford crossed the River Tugela with 5,250 troops to relieve a British base at Eshowe, and

"NO WHITES EVER DID, OR EVER COULD, SKIRMISH IN THE MAGNIFICENT PERFECTION OF THE ZULUS. THEY BOUNDED FORWARD FROM ALL SIDES, GLIDING LIKE SNAKES THROUGH THE GRASS" Captain Hart

camped at Cetshwayo's kraal at Gingindlovu, constructing a formidable laager. At 6am on 2 April, about 11,000 Zulus appeared and were gunned down by rockets, Gatling guns and rifles. Despite the slaughter, the British were beginning to admire the tenacity of their enemy. Captain Hart recalled, "No whites ever did, or ever could, skirmish in the magnificent perfection of the Zulus. They bounded forward from all sides, gliding like snakes through the grass." Lieutenant Milne was more succinct: "They are plucky fellows and a brave enemy." The Zulus were routed in one hour, leaving possibly 1,000 dead with only 14 British killed.

A burning capital

With a newly restored confidence, Chelmsford invaded Zululand again on 1 June with 17,000 men, and by July, the British had reached the capital of Ulundi. For the final attack, Chelmsford had a force of 5,124 troops against 12,000-15,000 dispirited Zulus. The British

infantry formed into a huge square, four ranks deep and marched in this formation surrounded by cavalry, towards the various kraals that made up the capital.

The Zulus expertly encircled the formation, but when the British set fire to the kraals, Private George Turnham remembered: "No sooner did the Zulus see smoke than they came running out of their cover like a swarm of bees completely around us." Nonetheless, the Zulus were checked by the square's intense firepower. Corporal William Roe said the fire, "...did fearful execution, for we could see their heads, legs, and arms flying in the air. They were falling down in heaps, as though they had been tipped out of carts." The Zulus did not engage the square and fled. A warrior said shortly afterwards, "Our hearts were broken at Kambula. I did not go within shot of you this time." A cavalry charge by the 17th Lancers completed the rout and flames consumed Ulundi. Lieutenant Slade watched the conflagration, "It was a grand sight and we all felt that at last the power of the Zulus had been destroyed."

Slade was correct, the war was over and Cetshwayo was captured and exiled, but there were no real winners of the conflict. Chelmsford never held a significant command again because of Isandlwana, while Frere never achieved his ambition of a confederated South Africa – Zululand was annexed and broken up. The tragic price of this unnecessary conflict was the death of thousands of people: British soldiers far from home and Zulu warriors defending their land and independence. All were lost for the dubious cause of imperial greed.

Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar ('El Cid') as he might have appeared in 1094, the year he took the city of Valencia. He is wearing chain mail armour that would have been the standard equipment for western European knights in the 11th century. Although Rodrigo governed Valencia as a virtually independent fiefdom, he officially ruled in the name of King Alfonso VI of Castile-León and therefore wears the Castilian coat of arms. He is also holding his sword called 'Tizona', which translates as 'burning stick, firebrand'. A Medieval sword reputed to be Tizona still exists and is kept in the Museum of Burgos.



Illustration: Jean-Michel Girard, The Art Agency



Left: El Cid slaying an enemy in battle, from a miniature created in 1344. Within 50-100 years of his death, Rodrigo had become a Spanish folk hero

WORDS TOM GARNER

EL CID

THE TRUTH BEHIND SPAIN'S CHAMPION

Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar is an icon of Spanish history, but was he a committed warrior or an unscrupulous mercenary?

In October 1094, the city of Valencia stood on the brink of falling to yet another conquest. Besieged by tens of thousands of invaders, the city's aging lord and his small force of knights were trapped within their own walls, awaiting almost certain defeat. Valencia's master had been a warrior for more than 30 years, but by now must have realised he was facing his greatest test. Gathering his men into order, he betrayed no fear as he gave his orders: they would ride out and meet the enemy head on. In a cry that would echo down the centuries, he drew his sword and proclaimed to his fellow knights: "For God and Saint James and at them!" He then charged through the gates and into legend.

The man in question was Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, a Christian knight who was known to his countrymen as 'El Campeador' ('Outstanding Warrior') and to his Muslim enemies as 'El Cid' ('The Lord'). The legend of El Cid has since become central to Spain's national story: the tale of the noble warrior who sought to free his Iberian homeland from the occupation of the Muslim Moors – or so popular culture and literature would have us believe. Rodrigo was indeed a highly talented soldier who inflicted many defeats on the Moors, but he did not do so out of any particular sense of religious fervour or patriotic dreams of a Christian Spain. In

reality, El Cid was an ambitious mercenary who was primarily interested in wealth, territory and personal glory. Above all, Rodrigo had no qualms fighting for Muslim leaders against his fellow Christians, which is in direct contrast to the core of his legend. Once all the gloss is stripped away from El Cid, what remains is a fascinating insight into the power politics of 11th-century Spain, where the conflict between Christians and Muslims contained many shades of grey.

Since the 8th century, Muslim rulers had controlled as much as two-thirds of the Iberian Peninsula, at a time when the relatively new religion of Islam was expanding into large portions of the known world. Iberia was the Islamic gateway into Europe from North Africa and a powerful caliphate governed Moorish Spain (then called al-Andalus) until 1031, when it fell apart and split into weaker Arab mini-states called 'taifas'. The Moors had largely supplanted Christian kingdoms that were ruled by the descendants of Germanic tribes, such as the Visigoths, and since the Muslim conquests, Iberian Christianity had been largely confined to the north of the peninsula. However, with the collapse of al-Andalus, the Christians began to reassert themselves, pushing their way south and starting to force the taifas to pay tribute or hire Christian mercenaries for protection. However, there was little, if any,

sense of nationhood or crusade among the resurgent kingdoms. It was into this confused atmosphere that El Cid was born.

Dividing the kingdom

Rodrigo was born around 1043 at Vivar as the son of a minor official in the kingdom of Castile-León. Ferdinand I ruled the land and Rodrigo entered his court as a member of the household of Sancho, Ferdinand's heir. It was in Ferdinand's service that Rodrigo first distinguished himself at the Battle of Graus, which is traditionally said to have taken place on 8 May 1063. The clash demonstrated the political complexities of the time and was the first occasion when Rodrigo fought his fellow Christians. Ramiro I of Aragon had attacked the Muslim kingdom of Zaragoza, and despite the differences in religion, Ferdinand sent Sancho with 300 Castilian knights (including Rodrigo) to aid the Zaragoza ruler Ahmad al-Muqtadir, because he feared an Aragonese expansion. Ramiro was defeated and killed and Rodrigo was reputed to have made a name for himself by personally despatching a leading Aragonese knight in single combat.

Two years later, Ferdinand died and his kingdom was divided between his sons, with Sancho II receiving Castile and his younger brother Alfonso inheriting León. Rodrigo was

made 'armiger' (commander) of Sancho's military forces, with his duties including the training and commanding of Sancho's household troops, which were the elite knights of Castile. It was from this appointment that Rodrigo earned his Christian moniker of 'El Campeador'. In 1068, Sancho fought a war against Alfonso, and Rodrigo led his troops at the Battle of Llantada on 19 July 1068 and again at Golpejera on 10 January 1072. This latter fight forced Alfonso into exile, but Sancho was assassinated in October 1072, and Alfonso succeeded to the Castilian throne.

As Alfonso VI, the new king ruled over an expanded Christian kingdom that included Castile, León and Galicia and he rather surprisingly kept Rodrigo in service, even marrying him to his niece Jimena. Nonetheless, despite now being married to royalty, Rodrigo was demoted from armiger and given routine administrative duties to perform. This was most likely as a punishment for his previous campaigns against Alfonso, and Rodrigo eventually fell out of favour in 1079.

That same year, Alfonso entrusted Rodrigo with collecting tributes from the neighbouring Moorish state of Seville. While he was there, he became involved in a war between Seville and

its Muslim neighbour, Granada. The campaign culminated in a three-hour battle at Cabra, where the army of Seville and Rodrigo defeated the Granadans. El Cid captured several prominent Christians, including the Castilian count Garcia Ordonez. Rodrigo was now in serious trouble, as Ordonez was a powerful Castilian nobleman who was married to the sister of Sancho IV of Navarre, and his ransom by Rodrigo was a significant humiliation for the Spanish royal families. Rodrigo did not help matters by openly bragging about Ordonez's capture, and Alfonso became exasperated by El Cid's conduct against his fellow Castilians. Rodrigo was eventually exiled, and although he remained loyal to Alfonso, he travelled east with his military retinue to take up service with the Muslim rulers of Zaragoza.

Mercenary for the Moors

Rodrigo was now a full-time mercenary captain and remained in the service of Zaragoza for the next five years. Although his true allegiances and motives are difficult to establish, it is clear that he was a serious soldier whose tactics would now be seen as quite innovative for the time. During his campaigns, Rodrigo often ordered that military works by Roman and

Greek authors be read aloud to him and his troops, both for entertainment and inspiration during battle. His armies also had a novel approach to planning strategy and El Cid held what would now be called 'brainstorming' sessions before each battle to discuss tactics. According to some sources, Rodrigo had a humble personality and frequently accepted or included suggestions from his troops. Although this seems unlikely behaviour from a confident veteran soldier, it is true that El Cid had a talent for imaginative improvisation.

One of his first battles for Zaragoza was around the Siege of Alcocer in 1081, where he attacked the nearby settlement of Castejon at dawn when most of the inhabitants were out in the fields. In an interesting insight into 11th century siege warfare, Rodrigo unexpectedly burst through the gates and killed 15 men. With the district now in his hands, he took local cattle and clothes to distribute to his men and made a camp at Alcocer with a trench around it so that his small force couldn't be surprised. He then took Alcocer by a trick, which involved striking all of his tents but one. The town inhabitants came out in curiosity to examine the remaining tent but they had been lured into a trap, and Rodrigo's force came into view to charge through the open gates, killing 300 of Zaragoza's Moorish enemies.

The following year, Rodrigo led the Zaragoza army and defeated a combined force that included the Muslim kings of Valencia and Lleida, the king of Aragon and the count of Barcelona. However, his most glorious victory for Zaragoza came in 1084 at Morella. El Cid was fighting for Yusuf al-Mu'tamin, who was being invaded by Sancho Ramirez, the king of unified Aragon and Navarre. Sancho had moved quickly, taking Arquedas and Castella, but Rodrigo and al-Mu'tamin launched a five-day raid into Aragon and ravaged the territory around Morella.

Sancho joined forces with the Muslim ruler of Denia, Lleida and Tortosa and camped by the River Ebro before sending a demand to Rodrigo that he withdraw. El Cid reportedly replied with an uncompromising message and won an overwhelming victory. He vigorously pursued his Christian enemies and took 2,000 Aragonese and Navarrese prisoners, 16 of whom were important nobles.

Morella was perhaps the antithesis of Rodrigo's posthumous reputation as the defender of Christian Spain and demonstrates that El Cid's allegiance was not to any particular cause but to whoever was the highest bidder. Nonetheless, a crisis soon emerged that would force Rodrigo into some sense of duty.

The wrath of North Africa

It was Alfonso VI, not Rodrigo, who saw himself as a Christian leader against the Moors and he envisioned himself as the head of a re-conquest of Iberia. In 1077, he declared himself to be the 'Emperor of All Spain' and increased his tribute demands from the taifas. The Muslim rulers appealed for help from Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin, of the Almoravid dynasty, the powerful Berber leader in Africa, and from this point on, tensions between Muslims and Christians in Spain intensified. Tashfin initially resisted the Moorish entreaties – he considered them to be irreligious and indolent – but in 1085, Alfonso conquered

“RODRIGO WAS NOW A FULL-TIME MERCENARY CAPTAIN AND REMAINED IN THE SERVICE OF ZARAGOZA FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS”



El Cid ordering the execution of pro-Almoravid Muslims after his conquest of Valencia in 1094. Like many warriors of his day, Rodrigo was not unique in committing acts of ruthlessness

EL CID'S IBERIA

C 1094

IN THE 11TH CENTURY, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL HAD NOT YET COME INTO EXISTENCE AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA COMPRISED OF A MYRIAD OF CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM TERRITORIES

In 1094, Iberia was split between a Muslim south and a Christian north. Muslim mini-states known as 'taifas' mostly came under the umbrella of the powerful Almoravid dynasty, while the Christian kingdoms were fiercely independent and frequently fought each other. Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar's battles were mainly fought within Christian territories, with El Cid often clashing with his co-religionists, as well as the Moors. His unofficial fief of Valencia was ostensibly Castilian but was arguably a huge prize for a warrior.

- ✕ BATTLE SITE & YEAR
- MAJOR CITY
- CHRISTIAN TERRITORY
- MUSLIM TERRITORY
- ZARGOZAN TERRITORY
- VALENCIAN TERRITORY



“DURING HIS FIVE-YEAR RULE, FROM 1094-99, RODRIGO CONVERTED NINE MOSQUES INTO CHURCHES AND INSTALLED A FRENCH MONK AS BISHOP”

A monument to El Cid in Argentina. Rodrigo is the national hero of Spain, a quasi-legendary figure comparable with William Wallace in Scotland or Alfred the Great in England



CASTILE-LEÓN
The most powerful Christian kingdom in Spain was a fusion of the two kingdoms of Castile and León, which had been reunited by Alfonso VI. The territory also included Galicia and part of what would become Portugal. With the capture of Toledo, Castile-León was instrumental in kick-starting the Christian re-conquest.

SEVILLE
In the 11th century, Seville was the most powerful taifa with an expansionist outlook, but was also home to heavily taxed vassals of Alfonso VI. Their dispute with Alfonso led them to ask the Almoravids for help, but the North Africans had absorbed them into their empire in 1091. By 1094, Seville was a shadow of its former self.

ARAGON
Although Aragon would later fuse with Castile to create a united Spain, it was a small kingdom in 1094 that frequently fought with both Castile-León and Navarra. It independently fought its own re-conquest south, to capture Moorish territories such as Huesca, and was ill disposed towards El Cid who had defeated the kingdom several times.

ZARAGOZA
Among the Muslim territories, Zaragoza was unique in remaining defiantly independent under the Banu Hud family. In 1094, the Zaragozans were allied to their former general El Cid in Valencia and Castile-León against the encroaching Almoravids.

VALENCIA
The territories in and around Valencia were officially governed for Alfonso VI but El Cid personally ruled them. During his five-year reign from 1094-99, Rodrigo converted nine mosques into churches and installed a French monk as bishop.

THE MAKING OF THE LEGEND

DESPITE HIS MERCENARY CAREER AND DUBIOUS LOYALTIES, EL CID BECAME KNOWN TO HISTORY AS A PATRIOTIC HERO THANKS TO AN UNTRUSTWORTHY SOURCE: POPULAR CULTURE

Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar's fame grew significantly in the centuries after his death, to the point where history became blurred with fiction. He was the glowing subject of an important long poem called *Cantar De Mio Cid* ('The Song Of The Cid') which was written between 1150 and 1207. It is the oldest preserved poem written in Castilian, which is the basis for the modern Spanish language. Tales of Rodrigo's exploits had already been circulating, but the poem, which was designed to be performed in public, distorted his character into a saintly figure. Every incident in the poem demonstrates his nobility at the expense of Alfonso VI, who is portrayed as lacking in character.

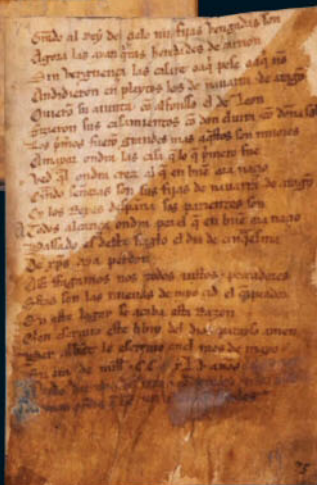
El Cid is frequently depicted as having a special relationship with the divine, such as when he is visited by the Angel Gabriel who tells him: "Ride, Cid, most noble Campeador, for never yet did knight/Ride forth upon an hour whose aspect was so bright. While thou shalt live good fortune shall be with thee and shine." In a similar vein, Rodrigo is depicted as declaring his own might against his enemies: "For the love of the Creator, smite them, my gallants ah. I am Rodrigo Díaz of Vivar, the Cid, the Campeador."

Like many other works of literature that glorify national heroes, the poem created a fictional character based on a historical person that was very much at odds with reality. So popular was the fictional Rodrigo, that he caught the attention of Hollywood and his current heroic reputation owes much to the 1961 epic film *El Cid* starring Charlton Heston and Sophia Loren.

El Cid taking Valencia in 1094. The picture shows a highly confident and powerful warrior, which matches up to the historical reality



The Song Of The Cid is the oldest preserved Castilian epic poem and did much to perpetuate the legendary exploits of Rodrigo



Toledo, which was the largest city in Muslim Spain and a focal point of Islamic scholarship.

The city was also important for the Christians, as it had been the Visigothic capital before the Muslim conquest, and Alfonso reclaimed its prominent status. This was the first concrete step taken by Castile-León in the re-conquest and the fanatically religious Tashfin felt compelled to act. A 'jihad' (religious war) was declared on Christian Spain in order to defend the Muslim faithful and to protect Islam's borders.

On 30 July 1086, Tashfin crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and landed with 4,000 Berber and African troops. By October, he had joined with Andalusian Muslims at Badajoz and met Alfonso's army at Sagradas on 23 October. Alfonso had scraped together as little as 2,500 troops and was heavily defeated, with the king himself narrowly escaping with 500 knights. Tashfin beheaded the Christian dead, loaded them onto carts and took them to cities throughout al-Andalus to prove the Moorish victory.

Capture of Valencia

Despite this dramatic victory, Tashfin had to return to Morocco to suppress an uprising and his triumph was not followed through. Nevertheless, Sagradas weakened Alfonso and the taifas allied themselves to Tashfin. In this crisis, Alfonso turned to Rodrigo for help and lifted his exile along with a generous settlement. In exchange for taking part in the new Reconquista strategy, Rodrigo kept the lands that he had seized from Muslim rule and within six years he established a protectorate over much of the eastern coast of Spain.

It was in the east of the country that Alfonso now set his sights, with Valencia becoming the main target. The city was an important cultural and commercial centre and Alfonso believed that its people would welcome a new ruler. Half of its population were Mozarabs – Christians who had adopted Arabic speech, dress and customs – while the other half were Muslims, split into factions who were either pro or anti-Tashfin.

Rodrigo was charged with taking the city, and after a long siege that lasted almost a year, he took Valencia in May 1094. It had not been an easy siege, as Rodrigo had ravaged the surrounding countryside for supplies, and once the town was taken, his men brutally sacked it. Having expelled the pro-Tashfin population, Rodrigo assumed the reigns of power and ruled in the name of Alfonso, although in reality Valencia became El Cid's own personal fiefdom.

Confronting the Almoravids

After Tashfin obtained a fatwa that legitimised his annexation of the taifas of al-Andalus, Valencia became the key to his strategy. If he could seize it from Rodrigo, he could then put pressure on Alfonso in Toledo as well as Zaragoza, which was stubbornly clinging on as the last independent taifa. In August 1094, a huge army of at least 25,000 men crossed the Gibraltar Strait with some galleys towing rafts, which carried elephants. Tashfin appointed his nephew, Abu Abdullah bin Muhammad, to lead the campaign into Spain, and the first objective was to take Valencia and eject El Cid and his 4,000 defenders.

Rodrigo would have had reason to fear Tashfin's force, as it consisted of the fearsome

Almoravid warriors. These North African soldiers were from different tribes and ethnic groups, but they were disciplined professionals, united by their fanatical devotion to Islam. They were trained to attack in mixed teams, organised to move en masse and connected by a corps system of flags and drums. 80 per cent of the Almoravid army was mounted in light cavalry formations and, although they were poorly armoured, they developed tactics to literally run rings around the heavily armoured Christian knights.

Almoravid cavalry was particularly noted for luring impulsive knights into the spears of the infantry and then defeating them with mounted archers who would bring down knights' horses before they could effectively charge. This was significant, as the principal tactic of the Christians was launching large-scale cavalry charges at significant moments. Furthermore, the zealous Almoravids were known to fight to the death and therefore were not easily dispersed. For Rodrigo, this new enemy was far more serious than the relatively minor battles he had been fighting all his life.

In mid-September, the Almoravids camped near Valencia at El Cuarte and on 4 October, Muhammad rode up to the main gates with his senior commanders and units behind him. He demanded that Rodrigo surrender immediately but El Cid, who had other ideas, declined.

Rodrigo's spies had informed him that the Almoravid arrival at Valencia coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, during which Muslims have to abstain from eating and drinking between sunrise and sunset. After fasting all day, many of the Almoravids slept late after a long night of heavy eating, and this routine left them increasingly tired and irritable. Rodrigo concluded that the enemy would be most vulnerable at the end of Ramadan, which in 1094 was on 14 October. All he had to do was sit out the siege for ten days before making his own attack.

However, Muhammad would not give Rodrigo an easy time. After El Cid refused the first demand to surrender, he ordered elephants to push forward six wheeled siege towers towards the city walls. Some of these towers were 30 feet high – tall enough to lower their storming bridges onto the city's battlements – and these fearsome structures were covered with rawhides that protected them from flaming arrows.

Muhammad reinforced these towers by strengthening the cordon around the city with deployments of archers, spearmen, and cavalry – making a point of displaying his elephants to the sound of trumpets. The garrison could do nothing but watch this intimidating display of Almoravid power. For eight days Muhammad appeared at the main gate, renewed his demand for surrender, taunted Rodrigo for delaying and condemned Valencia's Muslims for collaborating with El Cid during Ramadan. Soon afterwards, Rodrigo was alerted to the blackening skies where overdue rains were about to begin. Far from being an ominous sign, El Cid would use the weather to his advantage.

The storm of El Cid

At dawn the next day, mounted knights slipped out of the west gate armed

with new shields made of beech with iron reinforcements. The knights rode shoulder to shoulder in a single rank, which created the effect of a mobile shield wall. Rodrigo had picked his moment well: the Almoravids were struggling to wake from their Ramadan slumber, and as they did, the knights placed bundles of dry straw into the siege engines and set them alight. The Almoravid archers tried to shoot at the knights but the arrows were not effective against the shield wall.

At the same time, Rodrigo divided his main force behind the walls of Valencia in two and took personal command of the lead element. Climbing onto his warhorse, Babieca, he drew his sword and charged out of the gates into the burning chaos, with the cavalry trampling soldiers, tents and supplies alike in the cordon.

Once they had got through, Rodrigo rallied the troops to his banner as the second force smashed through the confused Almoravid rear. It was raining heavily as Rodrigo charged towards the enemy's main camp at El Cuarte. The leaderless Almoravid cavalry charged after them but they came upon a dispiriting sight – Rodrigo had used the downpour to order the irrigation weirs on the River Turia to be opened and the swollen watercourse had burst, destroying tents, supplies and wagons.

Upon seeing their camp washed away, the Almoravids were attacked on all sides by regrouped elements of Rodrigo's men. The knights killed all who resisted and elephants flailed in swampy conditions. A Christian chronicler said the victory was, "...achieved with incredible speed and with few casualties among the Christians" – while an Arab chronicler bitterly agreed: "Rodrigo – may God curse him – saw his banners favoured by victory and with a scanty number of warriors, annihilated sizable armies."

Despite his mercenary credentials, royal courts in Europe hailed Rodrigo's victory, and it is true that his triumph halted the Islamic invasion for good. However, Valencia has to be seen in context. Alfonso failed to capitalise on El Cid's achievement and the Moors would not be completely ejected from Spain until 1492. Rodrigo continued to win victories but always in his own interest, and he died peacefully at Valencia in 1099, surrounded by the spoils of his own personal fief. The man known as El Cid was a formidable soldier, but he was certainly not the ardent champion of Spain.



The death of El Cid from a 19th-century engraving. Legends abound that El Cid died in battle, but in reality he passed away peacefully in 1099 surrounded by wealth



FÜR TAPFERKEIT

“FOR BRAVERY”

In this new series, historian and researcher Rob Schäfer explores the prestigious and often complex history of the German Empire’s medals system during WWI, as well as the heroic stories of recipients. Here, he kicks off with an introduction to the medals awarded across the empire

WORDS ROB SCHÄFER

At the start of the First World War, Germany had the most advanced, and probably the most complicated, military awards system in Europe. Between 1871 and 1918 there was, in a certain sense, no such thing as a single German army. Germany was an empire of four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities and three Hanseatic free cities. Most of these states fielded their own armies (some only a single regiment of infantry) that was trained, organised and equipped after the Prussian model, which in wartime came under the control of the Prussian general staff.

The institution and bestowal of awards remained a privilege of the territorial lords and sovereigns of the Reich. While Prussian awards could be given to all German personnel, those of other states were usually restricted to their own citizens. Awards for officers were usually true orders granting the recipient with a title or access to a privileged group.

The highest award, usually available for Prussian officers, was the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross, which during the war was awarded to Hindenburg, Mackensen, Kaiser Wilhelm II, King Leopold of Bavaria and Ludendorff. The legendary Pour le Mérite, instituted in 1740, was awarded for outstanding merit in combat and conspicuous bravery in front of the enemy. During the war, 687 were awarded, most of

them to pilots of the German Luftstreitkräfte – the ‘rock stars’ of their age.

The Saxon equivalent of the Pour le Mérite was the Military Order of Saint Henry, while in Württemberg, the Order of the Crown for Military Merit was issued. Prussia could also reward distinguished military service with four classes of the Order of the Red Eagle with Swords and the Knight’s Cross of the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern.

Saxony had ten classes of the Order of Albrecht the Bear or the Silver Merit Cross, while Bavaria honoured the bravery of its officers with the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Maximilian Josef. Württemberg had the Military Karl-Friedrich-Merit Order and the Wilhelm Cross with Crown and Swords.

Equally, many states had an equivalently ranked award for enlisted men and NCOs. In Prussia, the highest award for bravery a ranker could hope to get was the Golden Cross of Military Merit, a golden cross on a black and white ribbon, of which 1,773 were awarded. Bavarians and Württembergers could be decorated with a Golden Military Merit or Bravery Medal, while enlisted men from Saxony could be awarded the Saint Henry Medal.

Prussia issued its awards to all states within the Reich, but as the king of Prussia was the kaiser of the German people and CIG of the German army, it gave them the grade and character of a truly German decoration. The

German award system was a progressive one, where each individual act of bravery could be rewarded. In Prussia, a soldier received the Iron Cross 2nd Class for his first act of valour, regardless of the circumstances. This meant that the act of valour necessary to receive the coveted cross, even in its lowest class, could be of the same quality than that necessary to earn a much higher one.

The Iron Cross 1st Class would then recognise his second act of valour. After reaching that point, subsequent decorations would be conferred with other Prussian decorations, like the House Order of Hohenzollern or the Golden Military Merit Cross. This means that a German soldier decorated with the highest bravery medal his state could bestow on him would already have received a number of other awards for exceptional valour.

This system was similar in all German states with the exception of Saxony, where it was possible to earn the Military Order or Medal of Saint Henry immediately and so to override all lower-classed awards. In the plethora of medals and decorations, none was more important or meaningful than the Iron Cross, which had been instituted in 1813 during the wars against Napoleon and had since then only been re-instituted in times of ‘declared danger for the Fatherland’ – in 1870 and again in 1914.

Even though there were higher awards for bravery and military merit, the Iron Cross had



Kaiser Wilhelm II awarding the Iron Cross to German aviators, c.1915

The Iron Cross 1st & 2nd Class

'At the end of August 1918, in the area of Bray, Corporal Römer of the 53rd machine gun marksmen section, alone and without support, disabled an enemy tank with the fire of his machine gun and shortly afterwards damaged another so severely that it caught fire. His courage and daring cannot be praised enough.'

Citation for the Iron Cross 2nd Class for Gefreiter August Römer of MG-Scharfschützen-Abteilung 53



Left: Iron Cross 1st Class, and of the 2nd Class (right)

"For fearless deeds my Kaiser gave
Me my Cross of Iron.
The greatest thing that I did crave
Of gongs it is the high'un.

This Cross is my most precious thing
And makes me feel so good!
P'raps another day will bring
one hewn from Argonnes wood.

Whatever! We don't all return
Our house and hearth to see.
Yet from every proud lip we learn
Our fathers' heirs are we."

Max B Vanselow, Infanterie-Regiment Nr 67

"With this letter I send you the wonderful news that I have been made a Knight of the Iron Cross. Since the start of the war this has been my ultimate goal; the only thing I aspired to achieve. When I die now, I go a happier man, for I know the reason why. Enclosed you will find the medal ribbon and the paper wrapper. Please be so kind and keep them for me. Farewell now my beloved ones. There is still a lot of hard work to do for the Fatherland."

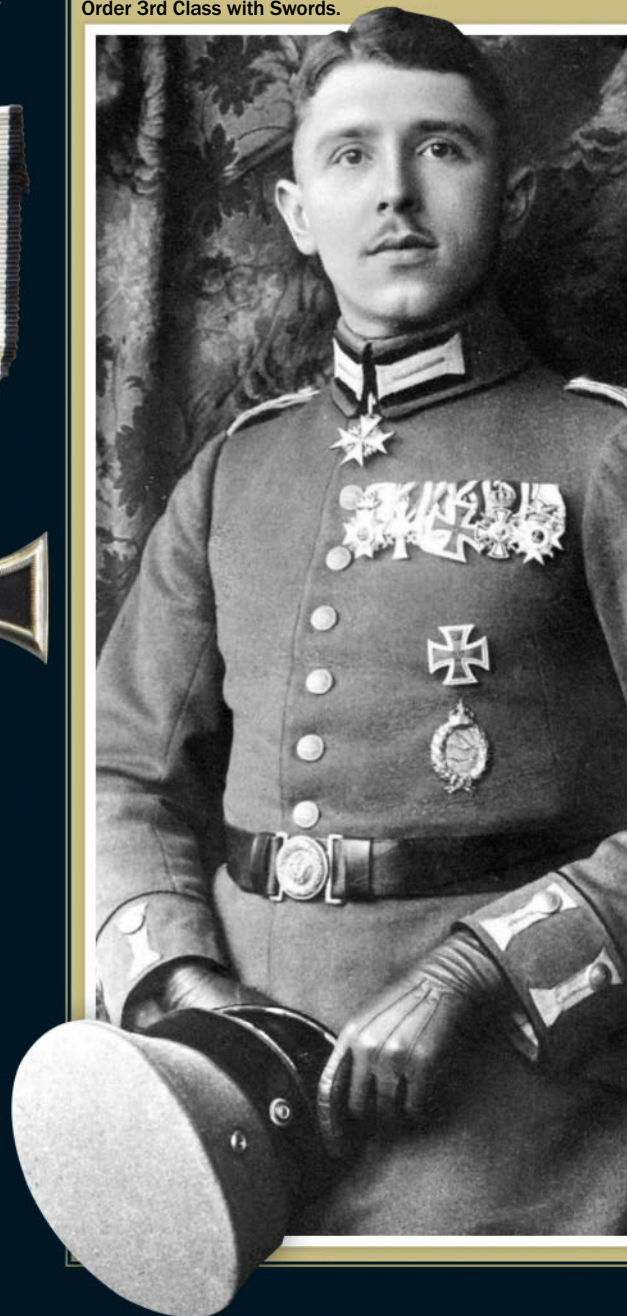
Unteroffizier Otto Leipner,
Infanterie Regiment Nr 132,
2 October 1914



Left: Blue Max: The Pour le Mérite, the highest bravery award for officers

Pour le Mérite

Flying ace Oberleutnant Max Immelmann, wearing the coveted Pour le Mérite around his neck and the Iron Cross 1st Class pinned to his chest. On the medal bar he wears the Saxon Knights Cross of the Military Order of Saint Henry, the Albrecht Order 1st Class with Swords and the Friedrich-August Medal in silver. Next to it the Iron Cross 2nd Class, the Knight's Cross of the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern with Swords and the Bavarian Military Merit Order 3rd Class with Swords.



Golden Military Merit Medal of the Kingdom of Württemberg

'Unteroffizier Weißer joined 12th company as a volunteer at the outbreak of war. In many, often hard battles in which the regiment fought at Becelaere and Polygon Wood against the English in late autumn 1914, the 17-year-old had already distinguished himself greatly. As a reward for his courage, he had received the Iron Cross 2nd Class and a promotion to gefreiter in May 1915.

'During the Battle of the Somme, he again showed exemplary and cold-blooded behaviour, staying calm even in the thickest drumfire and never losing control of his men, who followed him with absolute loyalty. Wherever there was a patrol to lead, Weißer was the first man to volunteer and he considered it to be an honour to be chosen for the most dangerous of tasks. During the late spring battles in the Champagne, he had already reached a legendary status among the men and covered himself in soldier's glory.

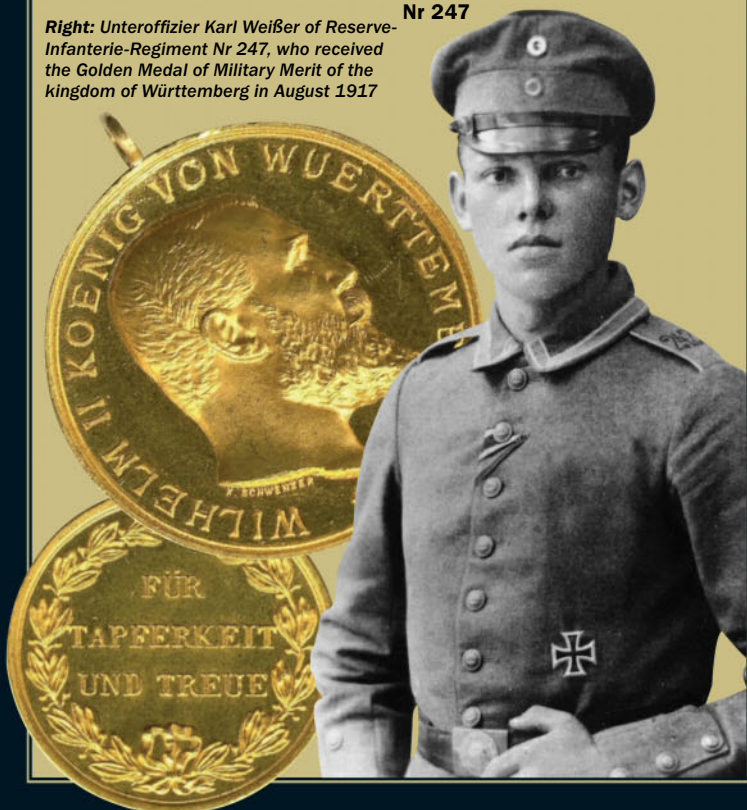
'During the fighting for the Cornillethügel and during an assault on the Pöhlberg, he managed to supersede even his previous performance. Weißer's company had been tasked to hold and defend a breach blown into the enemy lines in a previous assault. Immediately the

French launched one counterattack after the other to retake the lost ground. Weißer fought like a lion. He had mastered the art of hand grenade throwing to perfection and stood calm and cold-blooded in the face of superior enemy forces. Throwing his time-fused grenades with such perfection that they exploded in mid-air, he caused carnage in the ranks of the charging enemy assault troops. This did not fail to have an effect on the men around him.

'Like a rock, he stood while the fighting raged around him. The enemy broke – the first French soldiers dropped their rifles and started running towards their own lines. This was the moment that Weißer had been waiting for. Immediately, he assembled his men and gave chase to the retreating enemy. The bravery of this young unteroffizier had effectively stalled an enemy attack and brought him the long deserved Iron Cross 1st Class. Shortly afterwards, his king bestowed him with the Golden Medal of Military Merit.'

From the citation of the Golden Medal of Military Merit of the Kingdom of Württemberg for Unteroffizier Karl Weißer, Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr 247

Right: Unteroffizier Karl Weißer of Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr 247, who received the Golden Medal of Military Merit of the kingdom of Württemberg in August 1917



Golden Bravery Medal of the Kingdom of Bavaria

'On 14 March 1915, Balling was still a corporal attached to a mining unit of the 2nd Pioneer Battalion and was already known for his bravery. After a successful detonation near Saint Eloi, he immediately charged the enemy lines long before our own storm troops started the advance. Acting alone and without orders, he made his way through withering defensive fire to the English position. Standing on the sand sack parapet he cracked the skulls of two Englishmen with his rifle butt. Then, still standing in his exposed position, he started shooting the English inside the trench. His daring and contempt for death continued to serve as a glowing example of bravery for the storm troops following behind.'

From the citation for the Golden Bravery Medal of the Kingdom of Bavaria for Unteroffizier Franz Balling, Pionier Bataillon Nr 2

“HIS DARING AND CONTEMPT FOR DEATH CONTINUED TO SERVE AS A GLOWING EXAMPLE OF BRAVERY FOR THE STORMTROOPS FOLLOWING BEHIND HIM”

Right: The Golden Military Merit Cross of the Kingdom of Prussia



Left: The Golden Bravery Medal of the Kingdom of Bavaria





Images: Alamy, Getty

Three German soldiers injured in battle convalesce at a hospital near Grunewald railway station in Germany during WWI, c. 1915



A craftsman stamps the date onto a pile of Iron Cross medals, 1914

a much deeper meaning. It symbolised the cause: the protection of the fatherland and the will to shed the last drop of blood for it.

Due to this, and because of the fact that both classes of the Iron Cross were awarded regardless of rank, it was a coveted and much respected medal. The egalitarian nature of the Prussian Iron Cross contrasted with the awards of other German states, where awards and decorations were often based on the rank of the recipient. The 1st Class was far more likely to be awarded to officers and NCOs than to junior enlisted men. In the early years of WWI, to gain an Iron Cross was the ultimate goal for many soldiers:

“God rewards the brave! Hurrah it has been done! I was put in for the Iron Cross and it won’t be long until I will be able to wear this badge of honour with pride! For this symbol and for our fatherland I will continue to venture my life.”
Gefreiter Peter Jahn, Infanterie-Regiment Nr 56, 1 November 1914

A major problem was faced when re-instituting the Iron Cross in 1914. Wilhelm II had placed the rights to bestow them into the hands of his army commanders. During

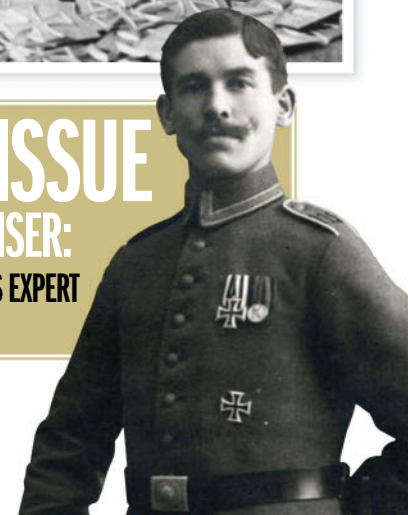
the wars of 1813-15 and 1870-71, this power had rested solely in the hands of the king and awards had been made very sparsely, underlining their importance and value. The decision to change this soon resulted in an excessive number of awards and commendations. Before long, soldiers who had never seen the front line were parading around with the precious cross on their chest – much to the dismay of the soldiers of the line:

“I have read that since the war has started, 38,000 Iron Crosses have been awarded... today the Iron Cross is not a special honour anymore.”
Stabsarzt Egon Kronenberg, 27 September 1914

Nevertheless, the Iron Cross as a sacred symbol continued to be revered. By 31 May 1924 (retroactively), 5.2 million Iron Crosses 2nd Class and approximately 218,000 1st Class had been awarded.

“Today I was awarded with the Iron Cross 2nd Class. It is the happiest moment of my life. May God help me to survive long enough, so that I will be able to show it to you.”
Husar Peter Näter, Husaren-Regiment Nr 3

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ROME

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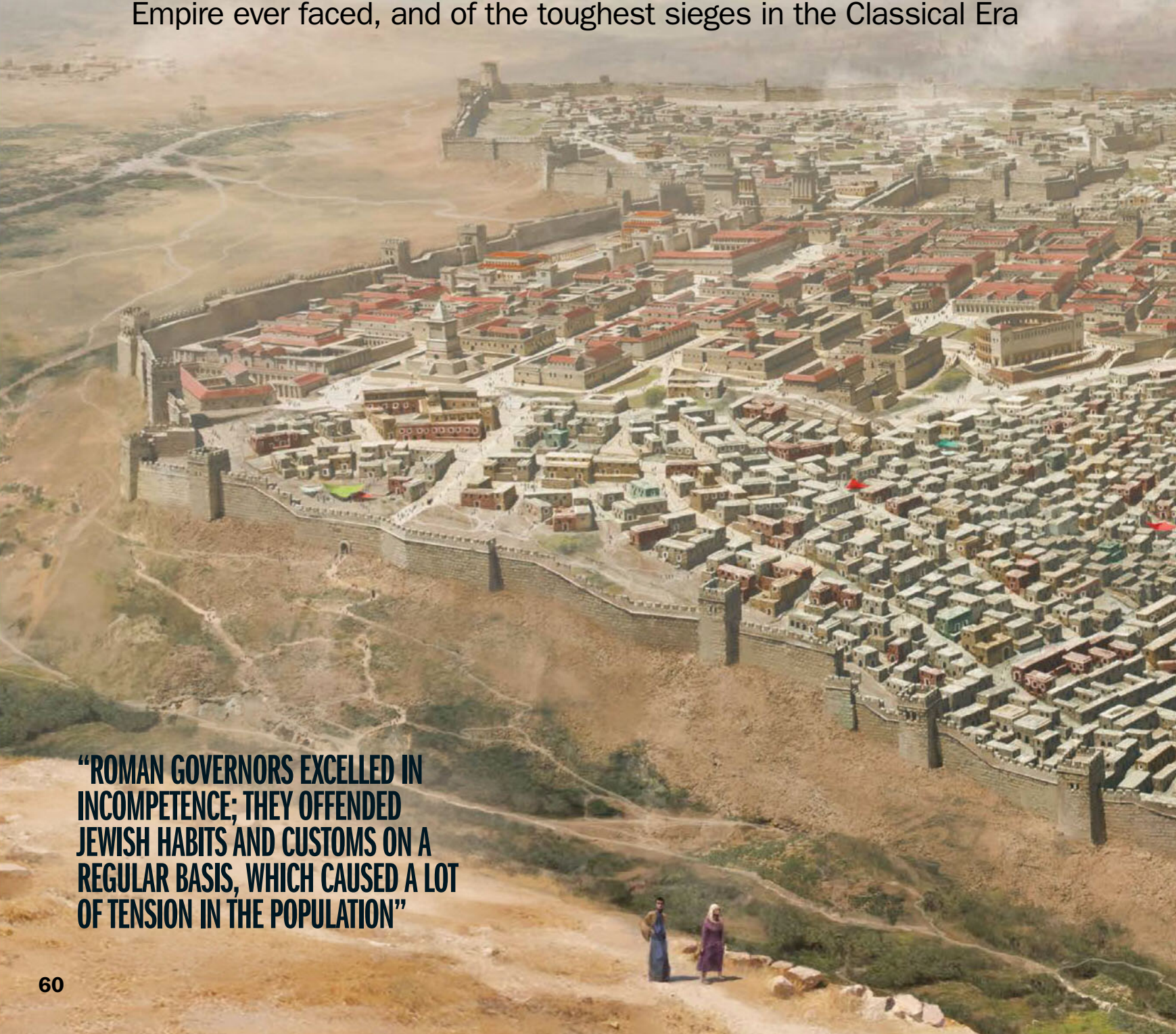
JERUSALEM

WORDS MARCEL SERR

THE JEWISH REVOLT AND THE FALL OF THE HOLY CITY

Discover the story of one of the most challenging insurgencies the Roman Empire ever faced, and of the toughest sieges in the Classical Era

“ROMAN GOVERNORS EXCELLED IN INCOMPETENCE; THEY OFFENDED JEWISH HABITS AND CUSTOMS ON A REGULAR BASIS, WHICH CAUSED A LOT OF TENSION IN THE POPULATION”



It all began with a great victory for the Jews in November 66 CE. For reasons we do not know for sure, the Roman commander Cestius Gallus, who had been ordered to suppress the Jewish uprising against Rome, called off his siege of Jerusalem. As he marched his army of 30,000 men on the narrow mountain paths towards the Mediterranean coast, insurgents ambushed the Romans at a steep and narrow pass close to the village Beth-Horon (half way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv today). In an open battle, the Roman army had no match in the ancient world, but when it came to skilful guerrilla attacks in difficult terrain, the Roman forces were as vulnerable as regular militaries are today, a lesson that Cestius Gallus had to learn the hard way.

Although the Jews were only lightly armed with slingshots and javelins, their strategic position on the hilltop gave them an advantage. They kettled the Romans in and attacked them ferociously. The legionaries had nowhere to run

and not enough space for an orderly defence. Only nightfall saved Cestius and his remaining command. He had lost almost 6,000 soldiers, his baggage, siege engines and even their prestigious eagle standard.

Murmurs of revolt

In 63 BCE, the Romans entered the scene in Judea (today's Israel) by seizing Jerusalem. During the following 60 years, Rome installed local rulers as client kings – the most prominent being Herod the Great (37 BCE – 4 CE). In 6 CE, the Romans took Judea under their direct control. However, Roman governors excelled in incompetence; they offended Jewish habits and customs on a regular basis, which caused a lot of tension in the population.

Judea had a population of approximately 1 million. Whereas Jews lived mainly in the northern Galilee and around Jerusalem, the cities along the coast were settled by pro-Roman, gentile Greeks. The Jews were divided into different religious groups that all hated

“WANNABE PROPHETS AND SELF-PROCLAIMED MESSIAHS CONTRIBUTED TO THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE END OF TIMES MIGHT BEGIN ANY MINUTE”

each other no less than their Roman occupiers. In addition, Roman taxation was a massive burden for the peasantry, and wannabe prophets and self-proclaimed messiahs contributed to the widespread belief that the end of times might begin any minute. This atmosphere of social, religious and political division gave rise to increasingly violent actions against Rome. Thus, the province was in a constant state of turmoil.

Jerusalem in the second half of the 1st century CE; a view from the south



THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM WAS THE POLITICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL CENTRE OF JUDEA

Jerusalem in the 1st century CE was stretched out over several hills. The north-eastern hill, Moriah, (pictured on the right) hosted the Temple Mount – a huge artificial plateau built by Herod the Great. Adjacent to the north is the Antonia Fortress – also built by Herod and named after his patron Marc Anthony. The ramparts were 18 metres high with 20-30 metre-high towers at each corner (the towers are visible in the picture). The south-western hill (pictured on the left) is called Mount Zion today and accommodated the upper city with spacious and palatial villas. This included King Herod's palace at the western corner, which was guarded by three mighty towers, each between 25 and 40 metres high and named Mariamne (Herod's favourite wife), Phasaël (his brother), and Hippicus (his best friend). The core of the lower city was located on the south eastern hill, where the City of David/Silwan is today (below, left). This is also the historical origin of Jerusalem because it is right next to the only water source in the area – the Gihon spring.

Three walls fortified Jerusalem: The first enclosed the lower and upper city and had been built in the 2nd century BCE; the second, established in the 1st century BCE, extended the city to the north; the third, commissioned by Herod Agrippa during his brief reign over Jerusalem from 41-44 CE, had probably only been finished shortly before the Romans appeared. The whole city had an extensive system of underground water and sewer tunnels, some of them leading outside the walls. This meant that the rebels could slip out and attack the Romans from any direction.

Image: Jose Cabrera

The Destruction Of The Temple In Jerusalem by Francesco Hayez (1867) depicts fighting and looting on the Temple Mount



The outbreak

The final spark triggering the ‘Great Revolt’ was a reckless provocation by procurator Gessius Florus. He confiscated part of the temple treasury in Jerusalem as compensation for overdue taxes. Such a desecration of the holiest site of Judaism was intolerable for the Jews, and immediately riots broke out across the city. To make matters worse, Gessius Florus sent more troops, thereby instigating a further escalation. When the rioters took control of the Temple Mount and the Antonia Fortress, Gessius Florus fled – Jerusalem was liberated. Intoxicated by their success, the Jewish priests stopped the sacrifices for the Roman emperor – a massive provocation.

These events unfolded rather spontaneously, so the question was what would come next? There was no coherent actor; different groups fought each other fiercely. The radicals wanted to get rid of the Romans for good, whereas the conservatives were pleading to come to better terms with them. Eventually, the radicals won the upper hand.

The task to restore imperial authority was handed to Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria. His campaign started very promisingly: Judea and Galilee were quickly brought back under Roman control and he advanced rapidly towards Jerusalem. He was in such a rush that he neglected the protection of his baggage train, which consequently was easy prey for Jewish ambushes. Roman losses were considerable, and the shortage of supplies and building material for siege engines and artillery was probably the reason why Cestius decided to break off his offensive early. Due to his defeat at Beth-Horon and his retreat to Syria, almost all of Judea was back under rebel control. But the rebels knew that this fight was not over yet – the Romans were about to return with force.

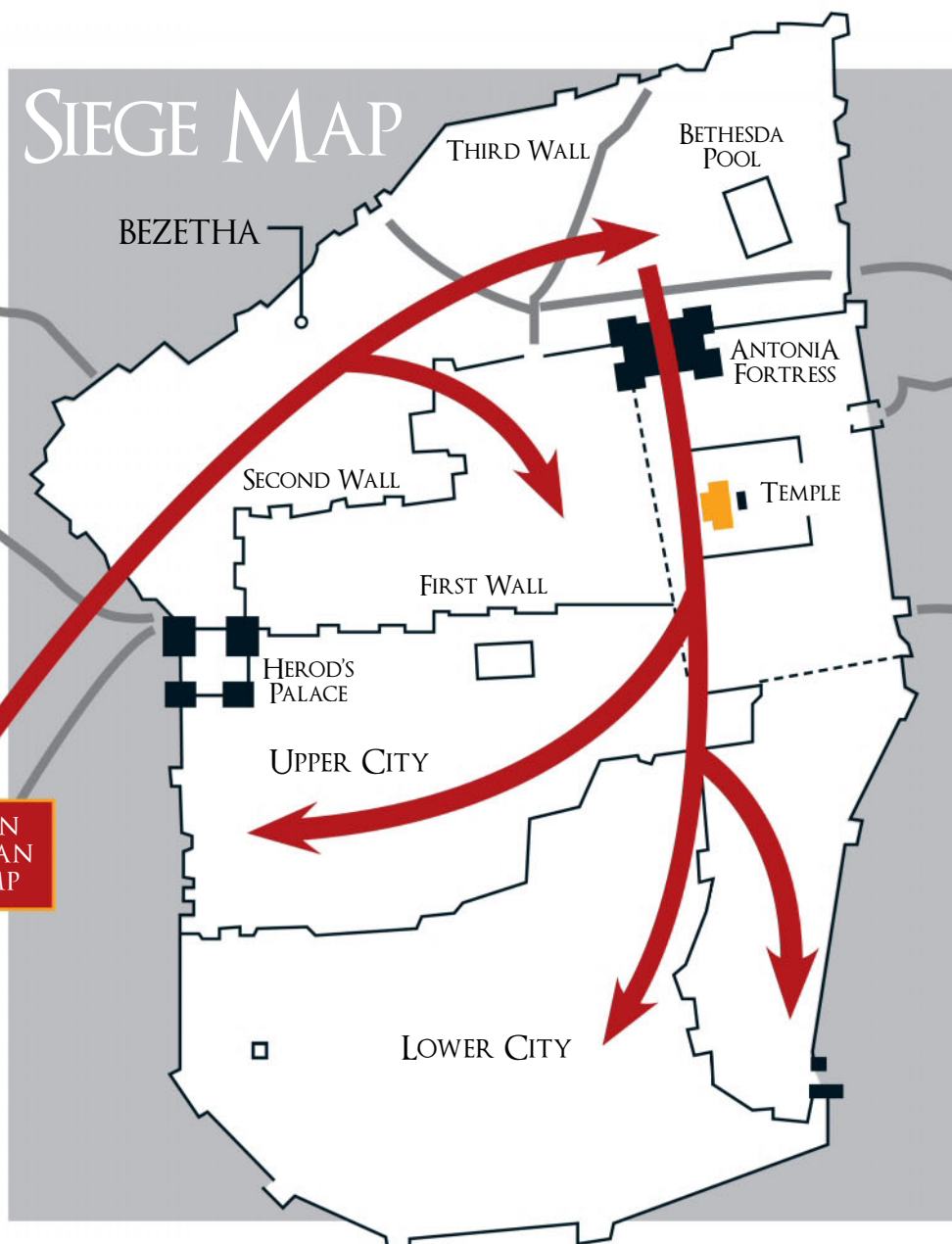
Imperial vengeance

Emperor Nero appointed Vespasian to deal with the insurgency in the winter of 66/67 CE. Vespasian had distinguished himself in the Roman conquest of Britain, however, he had fallen into disgrace recently because he had dozed off during a musical performance of Nero. In need of a battle-hardened general, the emperor remembered Vespasian and granted him the chance to win back Nero’s favour by crushing the Jewish revolt. Vespasian was accompanied by his son, Titus – a young officer eager to make his mark. Father and son gathered three legions, meeting in Ptolemais (today’s Acre in Israel). These regular forces were supported by 23 auxiliary infantry cohorts and six units (alae) of auxiliary cavalry. In addition, regional client kings sent their contingents. In total, Vespasian had an army of almost 60,000 men at his disposal.

The Jewish insurgents had proved themselves as formidable fighters when they had dealt the Roman army several severe blows and gained independence. However, holding the land was a completely different story. The Jewish fighters in the countryside were only lightly armed with slings, bows and javelins and wore no armour. Thanks to the armouries of King Herod, the output of Jewish workshops and also to arms dealers, the situation was much better in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the Jews were no



Left: A Roman copper coin depicting the Emperor Vespasian and the quelling of the First Jewish Revolt on the reverse



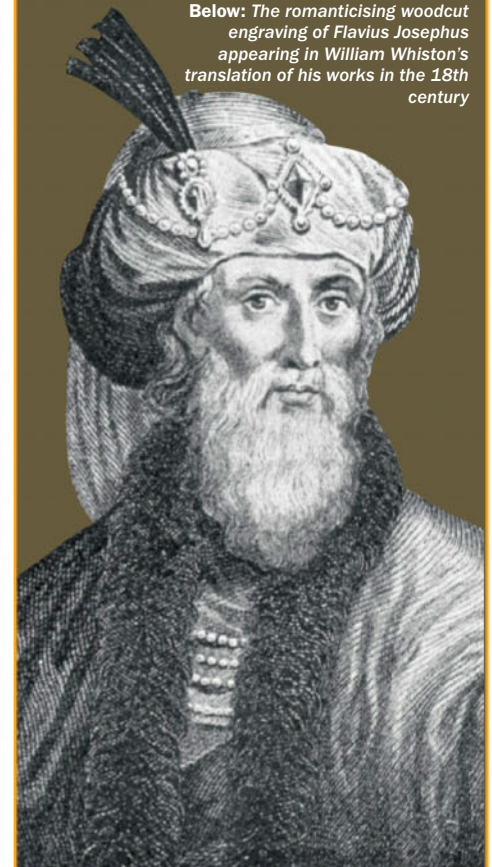
THE LIFE OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

MEET THE TRAITOR WHO WAS AN EYEWITNESS OF THE GREAT REVOLT AND WROTE THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED

Flavius Josephus (37/38-100 CE) is one of the most controversial actors in the Great Revolt. He was born into a renowned priestly aristocratic family in Jerusalem as Joseph ben Mathitjahu. During the initial stage of the rebellion, he was in charge of the defence in Galilee and commanded the defence of Jotapata. When the town fell, he and 40 men managed to hide in a cistern. According to Josephus's account, Vespasian promised to keep them alive if they surrendered. However, the Jews decided they would rather kill themselves than spend a life in slavery. The men drew lots in order to determine who would kill who. However, Josephus and another man survived and surrendered to Vespasian. By his own account, he saved his life by prophesying that Vespasian would become emperor of Rome one day. He served as an interpreter in the further campaign and helped with the interrogation of captured rebels. Josephus also tried to mediate between the Romans and the defenders of Jerusalem, but to no avail. After the sacking of the city, he followed Titus to Rome where he was granted Roman citizenship. He received a pension and a villa from the emperor.

Josephus is author of *The History Of The Jewish War* and *Antiquities Of The Jews*. The latter is a history of the Jewish people from the creation of the world until the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt. The former publication focuses on the Jewish rebellion against Rome from 66-74 CE. It is the most important written source of these events and represents one of the most detailed descriptions of a Roman campaign.

Below: The romanticising woodcut engraving of Flavius Josephus appearing in William Whiston's translation of his works in the 18th century



match for the Roman army in an open field battle due to the Romans' superior training, equipment and discipline.

This weakness became very clear in an episode in the early stages of the revolt. In the spring of 67 CE, when Vespasian had not yet arrived in Judea, the rebels launched an offensive against the coastal city of Ashkelon (north of Gaza). Because of its strategic importance as an access to the sea, the rebels committed their entire 20,000-strong mobile force. Guarded by only 1,000 men, Ashkelon seemed easy prey, however, the commander utilised his cavalry, confronting the attackers on the plain outside the city. The rebels did not stand a chance. According to Josephus,

“INTOXICATED BY THEIR SUCCESS, THE JEWISH PRIESTS STOPPED THE SACRIFICES FOR THE ROMAN EMPEROR – A MASSIVE PROVOCATION”

90 per cent of the insurgents perished on the battlefield. This disaster had diminished the Jewish army tremendously before the real confrontation had even begun.

The initiative now passed to the Romans. Having not enough resources to continue their guerrilla campaign, the insurgents focused on defending fortified positions. Vespasian and Titus could concentrate their forces on one rebel stronghold at a time. This was exactly the kind of war the Romans excelled in. In addition, the social and religious heterogeneity of the Jews proved to be a major liability in the insurgency. There was no central command, but rather a multiplicity of rival groups and leaders throughout the rebellion.

The campaign begins

In May 67 CE, Vespasian advanced towards Galilee. Before he moved towards Jerusalem, he wanted to control the rest of Judea. Gabara (today's Arraba in northern Israel), the first village that the Roman army came across, was razed to the ground in order to make an example. "The able-bodied fled, the feeble perished, and everything left was consigned to the flames." This is how Josephus, the rebel

The Arch of Titus was built to honour the emperor Titus' military victories. It was the inspiration for others like it, including the Arc de Triomphe

Left: Titus refused a wreath of victory after Jerusalem fell as he claimed that he did not win the victory on his own

“THERE WAS NO CENTRAL COMMAND, BUT RATHER A MULTIPLICITY OF RIVAL GROUPS AND LEADERS THROUGHOUT THE REBELLION”

commander in Galilee, described the Romans' effective tactic of terror and intimidation.

The next Roman target was Jotapata – a fortified town located on the north-western edge of Galilee, commanded by Josephus himself. Although the insurgents defended the walls bravely and managed to set the battering ram on fire, the inevitable was only postponed. Despite the heavy fighting that occurred in Tarichaea at the Sea of Galilee and in Gamla, 19 kilometres east of the lake in the Golan Heights, Vespasian took control of Galilee until the end of 67 CE.

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, the fighting between various Jewish groups became more and more violent. During one of the battles, the grain storehouses were set on fire – an unimaginably short-sighted act that would have deadly consequences during the Roman siege. The Romans monitored these developments closely and took all the time they needed to burn out every last pocket of resistance.

In 69 CE, Vespasian finally led his army towards Jerusalem. The city seemed to be doomed – however, events at the other end of the Roman Empire saved Jerusalem for now. Facing a rebellion by the governors of Gallia and Hispania, Emperor Nero committed suicide in June 68 CE. This caused a period of chaos in the Roman Empire that went down in history as the Year of the Four Emperors. Vespasian interrupted his campaign and considered his options. In July 69 CE, his legions proclaimed him emperor. Vespasian established his headquarters in Egypt's Alexandria, and his son, Titus, finished the Judean campaign.

The fall of Jerusalem

In the spring of 70 CE, Titus appeared in front of Jerusalem. His army was even larger than Vespasian's: four legions supported by 20 cohorts of auxiliary infantry and eight alae of cavalry, as well as local troops sent by the client kings of the region. The defenders mustered more than 20,000 well-armed fighters and artillery captured at Beth-Horon. However, the rivalry between the Jewish groups rendered an effective defence of Jerusalem difficult. Simon bar Giora and John of Gischala had emerged as the main rebel leaders. In addition, Jerusalem was jammed with thousands of refugees and pilgrims to observe Passover. Since the grain stores had gone up in smoke, there was not enough food in the city.

LESSONS FROM THE ARTEFACTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN JERUSALEM AND ACROSS ISRAEL, BEAR WITNESS TO THE HORRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLT

Since the 19th century, scholars have been fascinated by the Great Revolt and have excavated Jerusalem and various other sites in Israel for traces of the fighting and destruction. The findings are plentiful and paint a dramatic picture of the events.

The Romans were obviously very furious when they finally captured the Temple Mount,

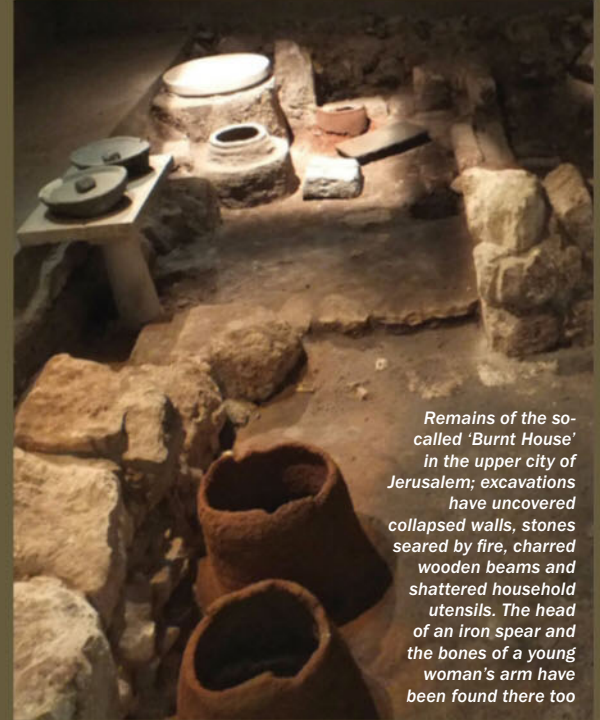
because it must have been a straining effort to push the huge stones from the upper colonnade down into the street. The result is still visible today. Other remains offer more personal stories of the destruction.

The so-called 'Burnt House' in the upper city of Jerusalem has been identified as the residence of the Kathros family (a stone weight with their

name on it was found there). Weapons and the remains of body parts point to the tragic end of the family members. In the meantime, life in the pagan city of Caesarea Maritima at the Mediterranean coast was business as usual. The preferred residence of the Roman procurators thrived even more after the destruction of Jerusalem.



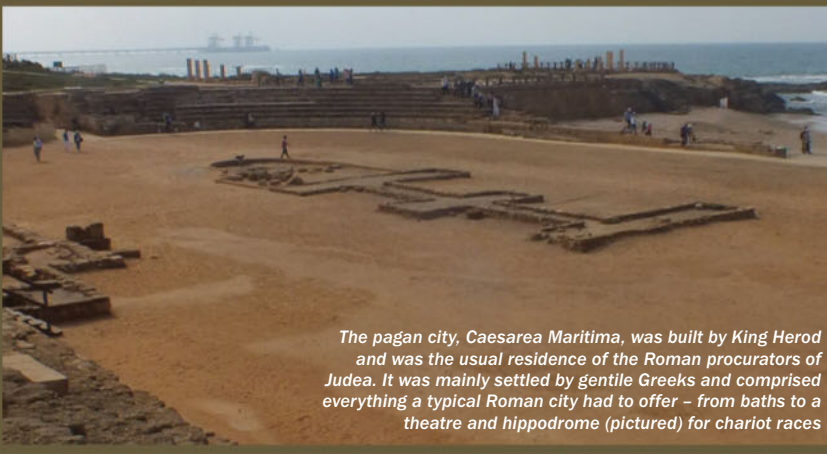
Remains of Jerusalem's main street, running along the western retaining wall of the Temple Mount; the pavement had been finished only a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem and still looks quite new. The Romans pushed down the huge stones from the Temple Mount (piled in the background of the picture), smashing the flagstones of the pavement



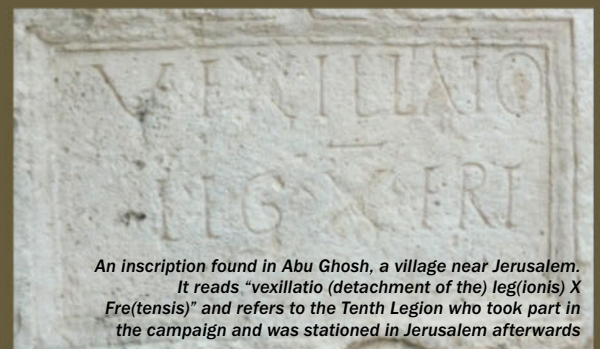
Remains of the so-called 'Burnt House' in the upper city of Jerusalem; excavations have uncovered collapsed walls, stones seared by fire, charred wooden beams and shattered household utensils. The head of an iron spear and the bones of a young woman's arm have been found there too



Replica of a ballista; these artillery engines had a range of about 400 metres and were mainly used for the destruction of fortifications. Each Roman legion was usually equipped with ten ballistas



The pagan city, Caesarea Maritima, was built by King Herod and was the usual residence of the Roman procurators of Judea. It was mainly settled by gentile Greeks and comprised everything a typical Roman city had to offer - from baths to a theatre and hippodrome (pictured) for chariot races



An inscription found in Abu Ghosh, a village near Jerusalem. It reads "vexillatio (detachment of the) leg(ionis) X Fre(tensis)" and refers to the Tenth Legion who took part in the campaign and was stationed in Jerusalem afterwards

When Titus arrived, he immediately undertook a personal reconnaissance, protected only by a small escort. While most of the Roman troops were busy setting up their camp, the rebels surprised Titus in a sudden assault and almost got him killed. Encouraged by this unexpected victory, the rebels sent reinforcements and threw the Romans out of their unfinished camp. The Jews had certainly won the first round.

Titus focused his attack on the western flank of the Third Wall. Under constant attack by the rebels, his troops constructed ramps and brought battering rams into position. On the 15th day of the siege, the Romans succeeded in breaking through the wall. Without losing momentum, they continued their offensive and broke through the Second Wall only four days later. The legionaries poured into the narrow alleys and walked right into the trap of the defenders, who attacked them with relentless hit-and-run assaults. So far, the Jews had smartly resisted any over-commitment and only gave ground slowly, inflicting many casualties while saving most of their forces for the last line of defence – the fight for the First Wall and the Temple Mount.

The general concentrated his forces on the Antonia fortress next, the key to the Temple Mount. The Romans started again with the construction of ramps. This time, however, the Jews undermined the ramps and filled the space with bundles of straw covered in pitch and bitumen and set everything on fire. The ramps collapsed and took the siege towers down with them. One can imagine how

demoralising it must have been for the Romans to see the result of weeks of backbreaking labour going up in flames.

However, famine became a serious problem in the city. Titus ordered the construction of a circumvallation wall around Jerusalem. Consequently, it became impossible for the inhabitants to sneak out at night in search of food. Josephus recalled that, "...starvation had killed all sense of affection, so that the slowly dying gazed with dry eyes and open mouths at anyone who had passed away before them".

After several failed assaults, Titus's forces had eventually managed to take the Antonia fortress by a stealthy night-time attack, and so the Romans pressed on the Temple Mount, encountering desperate resistance from the rebels. With hunger taking its toll, fighting shifted to the plateau of the Temple Mount at the beginning of August. On the 10th, the Romans managed to set the Jewish Temple on fire. The psychological repercussions of this event should not be underestimated; the temple was the most important symbol of Jewish identity and resistance against Rome.

However, the rebels were not finished yet. The lower and upper city remained in the hands of the Jews. It took the Romans two days to clear the lower city house by house. The upper city proved to be more problematic because Herod's Palace was well fortified. Another two and a half weeks were necessary for the construction of siege engines to attack the palace from the western side. However, by now the defenders were demoralised and weakened

through hunger and long months of fighting. When the Romans finally breached the walls and entered the palace on 7 September, most fighters fled to the underground of the city where they were finished off by legionaries in a merciless manhunt. This was the end of the Great Revolt in Jerusalem.

In the ashes of revolt

Technically, the Great Revolt of the Jews against Rome ended with the fall of Jerusalem. However, several isolated pockets of resistance remained. Only in 73/74 CE did the Romans manage to neutralise the last stand of the Jewish rebels at the impressive desert fortress Masada at the Dead Sea.

The consequences for Jerusalem were dire: the surviving residents were sold into slavery, the city was left in ruins for 60 years and the Tenth Legion Fretensis was permanently stationed there. In 130, Emperor Hadrian decided to rebuild Jerusalem as a Roman colony named Aelia Capitolina. His intention was to give the city a gentile look; there was no chance for the Jews to re-erect their temple. This gave cause to the next Jewish revolt against Rome, led by Shimon Bar Kokhba.

"STARVATION HAD KILLED ALL SENSE OF AFFECTION, SO THAT THE SLOWLY DYING GAZED WITH DRY EYES AND OPEN MOUTHS AT ANYONE WHO HAD PASSED AWAY BEFORE THEM"

FURTHER READING

- ★ **THE JEWISH REVOLT AD 66-74** BY SI SHEPPARD, OXFORD, 2013
- ★ **JERUSALEM BESIEGED, FROM ANCIENT CANAAN TO MODERN ISRAEL** BY ERIC H CLINE, ANN ARBOR, 2004
- ★ **THE FIRST JEWISH REVOLT, ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND IDEOLOGY** BY ANDREA BERLIN/ANDREW OVERMAN, LONDON, 2002
- ★ **THE JEWISH REVOLTS AGAINST ROME, AD 66-13** BY JAMES J BLOOM, JEFFERSON/LONDON, 2010

Images: Alamy, Thinkstock, TopFoto

This panel from the Arch of Titus depicts the spoils taken from the Temple, most notably the seven branched Menorah – today's emblem of the State of Israel



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BLOOD & COIN

The life and death of a Landsknecht mercenary in the most devastating conflict of the 17th century

WORDS PETER WOLFGANG PRICE

The Thirty Years' War is often remembered as one of Europe's longest and bloodiest conflicts, with its destructive origins rooted in the religious friction between Catholic and Protestant factions within the Holy Roman Empire. The treaty of Augsburg in 1555 settled many of the existing disagreements between the two factions, but did little to resolve the fundamental issues of imperial authority and the rights of individual states. When Ferdinand II, a zealous Catholic Habsburg, became king of Bohemia, Hungary, and then was eventually elected emperor, Catholicism began to be strictly imposed throughout the empire. By 1618, many Protestant states, angry at the imposition, openly revolted and war had begun.

For 30 years, terror and destruction plagued European countries, especially in the German states, where the lion's share of the fighting occurred. This wanton slaughter saw about 8 million Europeans lose their lives, with some

Left: When translated into English, Landsknecht literally means 'soldier of the land'

BRINGING SARTORIAL SWAGGER TO THE BATTLEFIELD

The Landsknecht showed that fashion could indeed be deadly. They were rightly famous and instantly recognisable from their bright and flamboyant clothing. Tights, slashed doublets, plumed hats, billowing sleeves and a wide range of codpieces identified an archetypal mercenary in the 16th and early-17th centuries. Wool was preferred over linen, as slashes in linen tended to unravel. The reason for this peculiar fashion sense was that the life of a mercenary was often short and brutal and so the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I, encouraged them to dress to impress. Armour, usually a breastplate, could be worn over the slashed doublet for added protection.

"THE LIFE OF A MERCENARY WAS OFTEN SHORT AND BRUTAL AND SO THE HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR, MAXIMILIAN I, ENCOURAGED THEM TO DRESS TO IMPRESS"



Pieter Snayers painting of the Battle of Breitenfeld, where Hagendorf and the Imperials were defeated by Gustavus Adolphus

“ONE OF THE DIARY’S MOST ASTONISHING ASPECTS IS THE EXTRAORDINARY DISTANCE HAGENDORF TRAVELLED IN 24 YEARS – ALMOST 15,000 MILES, MOSTLY ON FOOT”

German kingdoms losing up to 50 per cent of their populations. As well as the exceptional loss of life, the conflict is known for the large number of mercenary troops employed by both the Protestant and Catholic Leagues. Although by this point their golden years were waning, the German Landsknecht were still a fearsome fighting force to be reckoned with across Europe.

Created to combat and impersonate Swiss mercenaries who started to dominate 15th and 16th-century battlefields, the Landsknecht carved out their own fearsome reputation from international service in the armies of monarchs, such as those of Charles V and Henry VIII.

The main weapon of the Landsknecht, like many mercenary companies at the time, was the pike. Usually about six metres long, when used en masse the pike presented a hedge of razor-sharp metal that would decimate infantry and cavalry alike. The minimal training required to make a pike deadly in a recruit’s hands was preferred over the use of other weapons such as bastard swords, halberds and arquebuses. The latter was used with pike formations in increasing numbers during the later 16th and 17th centuries, in what would become known as ‘pike and shot’. Being flexible in this formation, which saw unit size

reduced and formation changes all through the 16th century, allowed Landsknecht groups to operate effectively during the Thirty Years’ War and beyond.

In the 1990s, German researchers uncovered a partially complete diary written by a Landsknecht mercenary during the war. Although the diary is not actually signed by the author, researchers have found that the book belonged to a man named Peter Hagendorf. His account paints a vivid picture of a soldier’s life in a 17th-century army, with hunger, poverty and death common travelling companions. Spanning the years 1624-48, one of the diary’s most astonishing aspects is the extraordinary distance Hagendorf travelled in 24 years – almost 15,000 miles, mostly on foot. His journey would take him across Germany, over the Alps to Italy, to the Baltic coast, then on to France, Pomerania and finally Germany again.

The diary also shows the fluidity of a mercenary’s allegiances, with Hagendorf changing sides three times during the conflict. While he served under Gottfried Pappenheim for most of the war, he began in the service of the Venetians. Here, he initially fought against Pappenheim, but after the regiment disbanded and Hagendorf was left in poverty, the

Landsknecht found himself on Pappenheim’s payroll from 1627. He would serve for six years before his company was caught in the Swedish siege of Straubing, and slaughtered almost to a man. Instead of surrendering, Hagendorf – now a sergeant – was recruited into the ranks of the Red Regiment. This sudden change does not appear to alarm Hagendorf, who goes on to tell how he sold one of his horses to pay for a three-day drinking bender with his cousin. However, this faction change also did not last long, as in 1634 after a sound defeat he was back on the Imperialist side.

The Thirty Years’ War, almost more than any other conflict, was fought with a background firmly fixed in religious intolerances. Peter Hagendorf strangely never mentions his or his regiment’s affiliations, although as a mercenary group this might not have been necessary. As the years progress, Hagendorf becomes increasingly brutal and offhand to the violence and suffering happening around, and caused by, him.

Despite war being a mercenary’s profession, Hagendorf’s diaries give scant information on the battles he was involved in. His company only saw two major set pieces in the war. One particularly brutal attack occurred on the city



Left: German and Swiss mercenaries lock weapons in what is known as the 'push of pike'

In this painting of the Battle of Wimpfen, you can see that dense blocks of infantry armed with pikes were used by both sides



of Magdeburg on 20 May 1631. Contemporary accounts focus on the horror and wanton slaughter that occurred there, when thousands of angry, hungry and unpaid soldiers broke into the city. The carnage was so great and terrifying that 'magdeburgization' became a byword for total destruction for many years to come. One resident of the city and an eyewitness writes that the, "...shouting, crying and howling could be heard from far away."

In contrast, Hagendorf's entry, from the soldier's perspective, leaves out the bloodshed and misery. He does express sorrow for the fall of Magdeburg, as it was, in his eyes, a beautiful city and was located within his 'fatherland', Germany. According to Tryntje Helfferich's translation of Hagendorf's diary in *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History* (2009, Hackett), he describes his part in the sacking: "I came into town with storming hand, without scathe. But in the town at the Newtown Gate, I was shot two times in the body, as this was my loot..." Unable to participate in the looting frenzy, Hagendorf was led back to the camp where he was given medical attention, "... for one I was shot in the stomach, and for the other through both axels that the bullet laid in the shirt. So the feldscher (army surgeon) bound my hands on the back so that he could insert the chisel (forceps)..." (Helfferich, *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History*, 2009, Hackett).

Being taken out of action, while obviously endangering his life, meant that the mercenary could not take part in the sacking of the city and therefore did not receive his pay. Luckily, Hangendorf's wife was on hand to enter the city and grab some loot. After fearing for her safety as buildings started being demolished, she bought back, "...a large tankard... two silver belts and clothes."

Hagendorf was also present at the Battle of Breitenfeld, which occurred just a few months after the siege. His account of the

"BEING TAKEN OUT OF ACTION, WHILE OBVIOUSLY ENDANGERING HIS LIFE, MEANT THAT THE MERCENARY COULD NOT TAKE PART IN THE SACKING OF THE CITY AND THEREFORE NOT RECEIVE HIS PAY"

battle, a crushing victory by the brilliant general Gustavus Adolphus, is rather muted as to the importance of the clash. If he was aware of the wider tactical and political changes, he does not make any note of them. The battle did convince many Protestant German states to back Sweden, but as Hagendorf is neutral, the significance seems to pass him by.

Money was evidently on the forefront of every mercenary's mind, even in times of personal danger. During the Thirty Years' War, wages, like rations, were most of the time late or non-existent. This in turn led to plunder and looting being the most effective way to get paid. Hagendorf frequently documents his monetary triumphs and woes, giving us an insight into the constant struggle to make a living during the chaos. Hagendorf had several schemes over the years to supplement his mercenary income. In 1625, he would work a trade with a lute maker after his guard shift, earning himself a reasonable profit. This money disappeared by the next year, however, with Hagendorf finding himself begging on the streets of Milan.

With no other income, Hagendorf joined Pappenheim's regiment, as he was, "... completely down and out." Tumultuous years would follow, he would be secure one

moment and then, like in 1634, he would lose everything. His servant was robbed of all the possessions he had sent away for safekeeping. Other enterprises went well, as in 1640 and 1646, he helped alleviate ration shortages by baking bread in a homemade oven, for a nominal fee, of course.

An army marches on its stomach and this was especially true during the Thirty Years' War. Long years of conflict had all but destroyed many crop yields across Germany, and daily rations would almost always come up short. A typical daily ration would consist of 730 grams of bread, baked with wheat and rye flour, usually prepared communally then shared out.

Corruption was rife in the companies themselves, with the bulking out of provisions just one of a growing list of problems. Some captains sought to increase their profits by recording 'dummy' recruits on their rosters. These men, while not existing but on paper, were given equipment and wages by their employer, with the most senior officers all taking a cut. While this lined the pockets of some, it did lower the combat effectiveness of the company.

The greed trickled down the command structure, with quartermasters and officers also on the lookout to supplement their wages. They would often cut the flour with inferior grain to drive up their profit margins. With differences in regional weights thrown in, the unfortunate soldier on the ground would often find his bread lacking. The story was the same with meat rations, with maggot ridden or rotten meat used to gouge some extra coin out of the situation. It is no wonder, with the ration situation so unpredictable, that men would turn to robbery to fill their empty bellies. Hagendorf, no stranger to pillaging, stole and burned vast swathes of French crops near Colmar.

Indeed, in the Hagendorf diaries, much of his writing is given over to the food and drink

FORM RANKS

TIGHT DISCIPLINE AND A RIGID COMMAND STRUCTURE WERE ESSENTIAL TO CONTROL THESE HEADSTRONG WARRIORS

The organisation of a Landsknecht company revolved around a complex command and disciplinary structure. The highest ranking officer, usually a colonel, would have direct control over the rest of his command group, which would have numbered about 22 men. In addition to ranks like captain, lieutenant, sergeant and corporal, there was also an ensign rank. It was their duty to bear the company colours, which served a dual purpose: One was to embody the company spirit and the other, more practical role was to act as a rallying point and landmark on the battlefield, where smoke and the clamour of battle could obscure views, the colours would act as a marker.

Other less-military ranks, were just as important in the running of a company. A selection of clerks, surgeons, cooks, priests, servants and musicians were essential additions that kept the company whole. Some of these positions were looked upon with disdain and disgust by their fellow mercenaries, but were deemed a necessary evil. The position of provost was such a role, with the man attempting to curb the excessive drinking, gambling and violence that was common place in a company. He would also be charged with keeping the multitude of camp followers – from provision merchants to cooks, prostitutes and craftsmen – in line. If anyone should loot, burn or attack without the consent of the commanding officer, they could be in line to meet the executioner. These individuals, identifiable by their blood red garb, were the most loathed people in the camp.

“IF ANYONE SHOULD LOOT, BURN OR ATTACK WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THEY COULD BE IN LINE TO MEET THE EXECUTIONER”

Below: Landsknecht prided themselves on their garish and colourful battlefield garb



Above: This 16th-century woodcut shows two mercenaries approaching a prostitute while death watches over them



Even though no one was seriously hurt, the Defenestration of Prague served as a catalyst for the revolt against the Habsburg emperor

HORRORS OF WAR

WITH MARAUDING ARMIES MENACING THE POPULATION OF EUROPE, BOTH SIDES ARE GUILTY OF ATROCITIES

The Thirty Years' War had horrendous casualty rates, as it was not just military units that were affected. The civilian population of Europe, especially Germany, suffered untold atrocities at the hands of marauding mercenary forces. Men from both sides were responsible for such acts like theft, extortion and even murder. These demands could also be levied as taxes, with

armies demanding food and coin while moving through a province. Extortion would consist of threats to person or property in exchange for payment. According to Tryntje Helfferich's translation in *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History* (2009, Hackett), Peter Hagendorf writes about such an incident while in the service of Pappenheim: "Wherever we camped overnight, the head of the household would give us... half a thaler. It was for the best, since then we...let him keep his livestock in peace."

These acts and many like them were a regular occurrence in the war, which is not

surprising as equally distressing acts were committed when the war was beginning. The Defenestration of Prague, as it is known, occurred in 1618 and was one of the direct causes of the war. Catholic regents had travelled to Bohemia in an attempt to calm rebellious Protestants. The discussion grew heated and coaxed the inflammatory words, "See, all dear lords, these men are great enemies of us and our religion..." With this statement, the regents were thrown from a window, luckily surviving the fall by apparently landing in manure.

he enjoyed on campaign. His description of feasts or a distinct lack of food seems to take precedent over all military engagements and most other aspects of life. Almost every year he feels the need to record when he received "good quarters." This could come to mean when an inn would serve chicken, duck or veal instead of tired old beef, the main meat ration.

Perhaps as part of his dangerous lifestyle, Peter Hagendorf expressed a great love for beer, wine and any other alcohol he could get his hands on. However, drinking would only give a short respite to his problems and usually

"BLASPHEMING, WHORING, GAMBLING, MURDERING, BURNING, ROBBING, AND WIDOW-MAKING... IT IS THEIR COMMON HANDIWORK AND GREATEST AMUSEMENT"

made an already tough life unbearable. In 1625, after he was disbanded from a Venetian mercenary company. Arriving at the town of Schaffhausen, he begged enough money for some warm shoes, a necessity considering he had just crossed the Alps. Instead, he found an inn where, "...the wine was so good that I forgot about the shoes."

In the 24 years we know Hagendorf was campaigning, his constant movement would make it impossible to settle down with his family; who chose instead to follow him on his travels. Raising children in that environment, when even adults are susceptible to hunger, cold and illness, would have been a supreme challenge. Tragically, over the course of 24 years, he suffers through the deaths of seven of his children and his first wife. These children, marked with a simple cross in the diary, usually don't even live a few months before becoming ill and passing away. After peace was declared in 1648, Hagendorf was reunited with his only surviving son and, with the fighting finished, states: "I brought my son out of Egypt."

The heavy use of mercenaries in the Thirty Years' War was not a popular one with local

populations. Using underpaid men that made their wages by looting could mean that an army stayed in the field for years. The promise of plunder would keep many braving terrible conditions on and off the battlefield. A 16th-century writer described them as, "Blaspheming, whoring, gambling, murdering, burning, robbing and widow-making... it is their common handiwork and greatest amusement."

This ad hoc system may go some way to explain some of the brutal methods used by Landsknecht and other mercenaries. These were men who endured sometimes unimaginable hardships. Hunger, disease, poverty and death on the battlefield would have hung over the heads of many, perhaps driving them to questionable actions for the simple need of survival.

A copy of Hagendorf's diary is available in *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History* by Hackett Publishing, edited & translated by Tryntje Helfferich



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Philippines in flames

For half a century, Muslims of Mindanao have been trying to secede from the Philippines. With no end in sight, is lasting peace impossible?

WORDS MIGUEL MIRANDA

At the edge of the Pacific Ocean, spread over Asia's doorstep, lies the Philippines. This chaotic archipelago, with a population racing past 100 million people, has three main geographic areas. There's the imposing landmass of Luzon – where the Spanish established a colonial regime lasting 333 years. Beneath Luzon are the colourful Visayas, which form a path to Mindanao, the large, southern most island that would almost connect with Borneo were it not for the emerald waters of the Sulu Sea.

For the past 50 years, Mindanao's Muslim population, which forms a disparate selection of rural communities inhabiting eastern regions, have fought the government in the capital city of the Philippines, Manila. The origins of their struggle are ambiguous, though dispossession and revenge are its broader themes.

Simply put, there is a profound sense that Mindanao's distinct heritage and culture are at odds with the rest of the Philippines. Rather than foster reconciliation, this rift has laid the groundwork for an impossible conflict. During the 1970s, it pitted Christians against Moros – the tribes the Spanish once derided as Moors after the Arabs who ruled Spain for eight centuries. The Malays appropriated the term and were identified as such when the United States conquered the Philippines in the early 20th century and faced off against fanatical tribal warriors who never understood the meaning of surrender.

The tough cavalryman General John 'Black Jack' Pershing, who went on to command the US Army in WWI, led American forces against

the Moros in what was known as the Moro Rebellion. During WWII, the Allies delivered thousands of rifles and machine guns to Mindanao, hoping these would aid uprisings against the Japanese occupation. Even today US soldiers are present in Mindanao, conducting counter-terrorism missions.

The original guerrilla movement that launched the Moro independence struggle in 1972 was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). They called their goal the Bangsamoro or, in the most literal sense, the Moorish Nation. It was a dangerous gambit, for the Bangsamoro they envisaged occupied Mindanao, with its patchwork of ethnicities, and claimed Palawan, the longitudinal island skirting the South China Sea. This meant if the Moros won their freedom from Manila, they would break the Philippines in half.

Far from rank amateurs, the Moro culture of Mindanao always belonged to imperious warriors. They had been using firearms were around for centuries, be they locally forged lantaka cannons or rifles procured from the USA. The enduring symbol of leadership among the Moros, the Datu (chief), carried his own arms, along with a retinue of fighters.

In 1972, the nature of the fight was a lot less convoluted compared to now. The revolt sprung by the MNLF involved cadres trained and supplied by Malaysian advisers. The ulterior motive behind Kuala Lumpur's support for the MNLF was to damage the Philippines' internal cohesion, thereby keeping its easternmost province Sabah away from Manila's clutches.

This cunning strategy paid off. So vicious was the ensuing combat between the MNLF and the

ASIA'S ANGRIEST NATION

1450

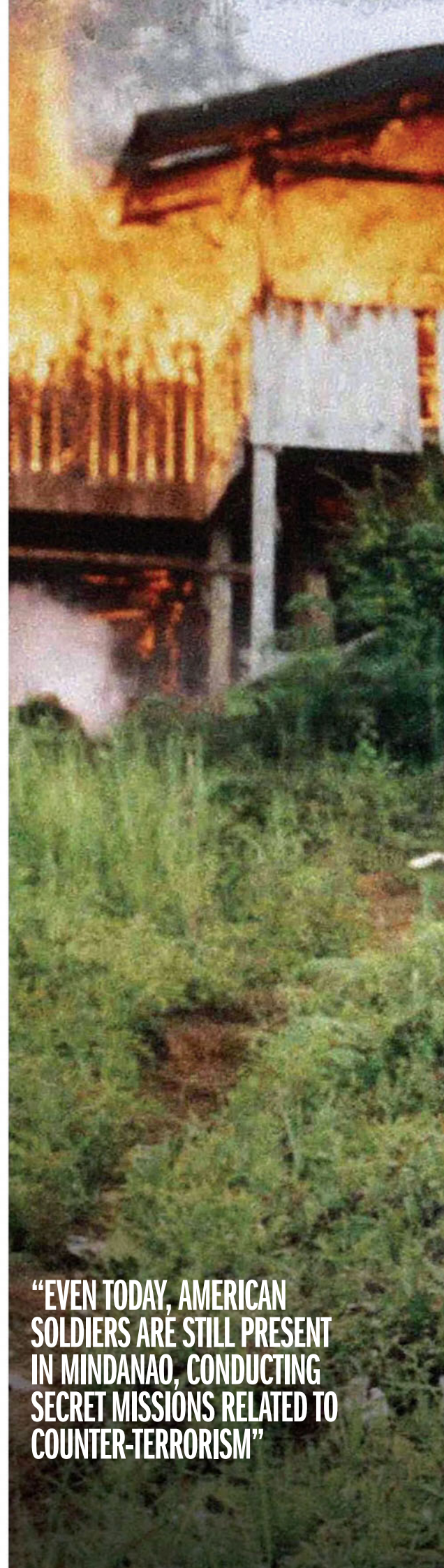
Muslim Arab traders arrive in Sulu and establish ties with the local nobility. The loose collection of islands above the Celebes Sea becomes a long-standing market for slaves and spices.

1565

The Spanish adventurer Miguel Lopez de Legazpi arrives in the Visayas where he establishes a permanent base. In several years, he's the governor general of the Philippine Islands.

1899-1918

Having bested Spain in Cuba and Manila Bay, the United States begins its conquest of the Philippines. The imperial project bogs down in Mindanao where local resistance drags on for almost 20 years.



“EVEN TODAY, AMERICAN SOLDIERS ARE STILL PRESENT IN MINDANAO, CONDUCTING SECRET MISSIONS RELATED TO COUNTER-TERRORISM”



A Filipino soldier walks away from a burning MILF shelter during a 'mopping up' operation at Camp Bilal, 2003

Armed Forces of the Philippines, who had a well-equipped constabulary and *laga* militias fighting alongside it, that President Ferdinand Marcos's administration resorted to a media blackout and sent thousands more troops.

By September 1972, President Marcos announced on television he was declaring martial law, citing an overwhelming communist threat as a pretext for arresting his enemies in local newspapers, politics and society.

The Firebrand

The war in Mindanao doesn't have an official name, forming part of a selective amnesia in the Philippine psyche reserved for unpleasant historical experiences. When a peasant uprising in southern Luzon almost spread to Manila in the 1950s – a crisis that forced the CIA's intervention – the whole episode was hailed as a triumph of the Philippine state against Marxism. This was dubbed the 'Huk Rebellion', after a local anti-Japanese resistance movement turned against the oligarchs in the Philippine capital in an alleged communist plot. No official account of this conflict ever describes it as a genuine civil war, despite the Huk Rebellion's impact on the subsequent Maoist-Marxist insurgency that spread across the Philippines.

Likewise in Mindanao, where a true Philippine civil war rages, the violence is understood as a consequence of Manila trampling on Moro rights. This is problematic because it ignores the subterfuge and bad faith all factions in Mindanao have inflicted on each other for so long.

An indispensable figure in this drama is Nur Misuari. Born in a seaside village of the seafaring Tausug, a people renowned as mariners and pirates in the Sulu archipelago, the boy's preoccupation then was rough play and school, with no trace of the revolutionary spirit that would possess him as a young man.

It's ironic how the Philippine public school system, with its system of scholarships and grants, managed to uplift Misuari from poverty and provide a short-lived academic career in the government-run University of the Philippines. Nothing foreshadowed Misuari's destiny as a nemesis of the state. His path to rebellion, however, began with the Jabidah Massacre and its accompanying political scandal.

During the 1960s, Sabah in eastern Borneo was joined to the Federation of Malaysia, but the Sultan of Sulu – who was Sabah's nominal ruler – ceded his rights over the domain to the Philippine government in 1962. This led to an awkward territorial dispute where the Philippines insisted on claiming Sabah.

When diplomacy failed, subterfuge became the preferred option. A covert program, run by the Philippine military, was launched and took place in the island of Corregidor, just off

“HIS PATH TO REBELLION BEGAN WITH THE JABIDAH MASSACRE AND ITS ACCOMPANYING POLITICAL SCANDAL”

Manila. Its goal was to train vetted Tausugs in sabotage and infiltration for deployment in Sabah. But the project soon went awry in 1968 and an entire batch of recruits were machine gunned to death. It was the testimony of an alleged lone survivor who later spilled the beans to the Manila press. The name 'Jabida' came from Moro folklore and was used as a catchphrase for the bizarre circumstances surrounding the massacre.

Malaysia, now alerted to the Philippine threat, sought payback. In 1971, Nur Misuari, then a young professor, was recruited into a quasi-militant organisation called the MNLF and received training in remote jungle camps run by Malaysian advisers.

At first, Misuari, together with a core group of 90 like-minded revolutionaries, participated in the fighting from 1972-74. But as support from Kuala Lumpur waned, Misuari had to evict himself from the battlefield and solicit aid from the greater Muslim world.

His patrons then were the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, or OIC, an association of Muslim countries, and Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi, who used Libya's oil wealth to finance terrorists and rebels during the Cold War. How much money he donated to the MNLF isn't known, but it was substantial enough for lots of AK-47s and back-channel peace talks in Tripoli, where the glamorous Imelda Marcos, acting as special envoy from Manila, tried to win over the MNLF – and succeeded.

Nur Misuari's resulting career as guerrilla leader, freedom fighter and would-be politician was a roller coaster of breathtaking intrigues and horrible defeats. At one point, with the Tripoli Agreement in tatters and his own troops in revolt, Misuari divided his time between Libya, Europe, and Pakistan as a roving exile, unable to return home.

Once brought in from the cold by President Corazon Aquino in 1986, Misuari enjoyed his newfound legitimacy. His greatest triumph was assuming the governorship of the ARMM, an enclave of combined Muslim provinces, in 1996. The ARMM was also his undoing, however, because seemingly former guerrillas make for lousy public servants. Misuari soon bickered with Manila, and after a brief revolt by his loyalists, he was placed under house arrest.

After regaining his freedom in 2008, the 69-year-old Misuari returned to Sulu. In the ensuing years, he grew suspicious of a looming



Inset, right: A MILF member trains with an M60 machine gun

The MILF and its mujahideen have been fighting for a separate Muslim state since 1976

Below: A Muslim rebel holds his weapon inside a village in Sultan Kudarat



1941

A day after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the Imperial Japanese Navy launches its assault on the Philippines. The USA's last bastion in Asia succumbs within months and endures brutal occupation.

1946

Though devastated by World War II, the Philippines is granted full independence by the US, with Mindanao considered an irrevocable part of the republic. The nascent country preoccupies itself with rebuilding.

1968

On 18 March, a group of Tausug recruits are slaughtered in Corregidor, the island fortress guarding Manila. The controversy over the Jabidah Massacre sours ties between the Philippines and Malaysia.



1972

On 21 September, President Ferdinand Marcos issues Proclamation 1081 during a televised address. Martial law is imposed on the Philippines and the Mindanao rebellion begins in earnest.

1974

On 18 March, the MNLF formally secedes from the Republic of the Philippines and declares its own separate state, the Bangsamoro Republik. Manila ignores the claim.



peace deal between President Aquino's administration and the rival Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which had originally broken with the MNLF in 1976. Fearing the abolition of the ARMM to appease his rivals, in 2013 he announced secession from the Philippines and tried marching his fighters to Zamboanga, where a week-long battle took place between the military and the MNLF, razing entire swathes of the historic city. Defeated, Misuari and his loyalists went underground and stayed quiet.

Misuari, who managed to support six wives during his tumultuous career, was once more susceptible to fresh overtures from Manila. However, with an arrest warrant on his head, he could end up behind bars again.

From Tripoli to Abubakar

The profound tragedy of Mindanao is that, after so long, the struggle to emancipate its Muslims never accomplished lasting change. This led to a predictable outcome where chronic warfare breeds further conflict. Where the MNLF had its stronghold in Sulu the even more militant MILF was based in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, two provinces with equally long histories of unrest and resistance against the Philippine state.

At the turn of the century, the MILF's strength could have reached 15,000 fighters. Recognisable for their green flag imprinted with a sword, the MILF's commanders and fighters wore tiger-stripe fatigues reminiscent of American Green Berets in the Vietnam War. Clandestine smuggling routes supplied them with small arms from Vietnam, China, Malaysia and Indonesia, and there was substantial evidence the group maintained crude munitions factories for mines, bombs and grenades –including knock-off mortars and B-40 rocket launchers.

Leading the MILF was another soldier scholar, Hashim Salamat, who had the benefit of having studied in Egypt, where he was influenced by Islamist Sayyid Qutb's writings. It deserves mention that Qutb is the intellectual father of the Muslim Brotherhood and a seminal figure in jihadist literature.

The stark difference between Salamat and Misuari is that the former believed in the primacy of Islam, whereas Misuari and MNLF were susceptible to left-leaning nationalism.

Years later, this would repeat itself as the Moro rebellion fragmented and atomised into antagonistic parts. Beginning in the 1990s, suspected jihadis would form another rebel group called Abu Sayyaf and establish



Members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) displaying their arsenal of AK-47 assault rifles and a Soviet made B-40 anti-tank rocket launcher



MNLF fighters surrender their firearms to President Marcos

1976

With the unbearable human and material costs of the war straining the Marcos regime, Manila and the MNLF accept the Tripoli Agreement. The MNLF leadership splinters soon after.

1986

Ferdinand Marcos and his family escape from the Philippines after they're ousted by a popular revolt. The new government, led by President Corazon Aquino, is committed to solving the Mindanao question.

1987

The Philippine government and the MNLF agree to a conference in Saudi Arabia. The resulting Jeddah Accord ends on a high note, with the promise of an autonomous Muslim enclave for the MNLF.



1996

Ten years later, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao is established with Nur Misuari as its first governor. The ARMM is a basket case and its administration is soon bankrupt.

2000

The breakaway Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), goes to war against the Philippine military and is defeated. On 9 June, its headquarters, Camp Abubakar, falls after a long siege.

themselves on the island of Basilan. Rather than quibble with ideology or political goals, they rushed headlong into terrorism and crime, grabbing international headlines after a string of high-profile abductions.

Despite being targeted by the Philippine military for 25 years, the Abu Sayyaf remains a threat. In April 2016, members beheaded Western hostage John Ridsdel from Canada, then two months later, did the same to his friend Robert Hall, after no ransom was paid. The Abu Sayyaf's atrocities are a painful irony in the broader malaise of the southern Philippines. They contribute nothing to the political struggle of Filipino Muslims but are practicing a time-honoured tradition of slave raiding and kidnapping, done by the fierce Samal, Badjao, Balangingi and Iranun tribes who plied Mindanao's waters in centuries past.

Even the MILF, with its efforts at trying to appease the Philippine government, hasn't set its own house in order. History repeated itself in 2013 when members of the MILF broke ranks for the same reason as the 1970s split in the Moro revolution. The re-branded Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, or BIFF, believed their comrades in arms weren't ardent enough in their struggle for an exclusive Muslim state and rejected peace talks with Manila.

This state of affairs would be laughable if it weren't heartbreaking, since it would lead to additional years of conflict. Right from the start, the MILF wasn't just committed to secession but an Islamic society based on Sharia Law. This was evident in the MILF camp system that had mosques, schools, jails and administrative buildings functioning outside the state. The MILF 'capital', Camp Abubakar, spread over 100 square kilometres and was fortified by layers of trenches, spider holes and pillboxes.

The short-lived war between the MILF and the Philippine government in 2000 was over control of Camp Abubakar, the boundaries of which were beginning to encroach on a national highway linking important cities. Lasting the better part of a year, the Philippine army and Marines spent weeks clearing elaborate tunnel and bunker networks.

With air support from OV-10 Broncos and a helicopter gunship, the final push for Camp Abubakar was accomplished without excessive bloodshed. An elated President Joseph Estrada, who used to star in B-movies such as *Suicide Commandos* and *Kill The Pushers* during the

“WHEN EXAMINING THE CORPSES AFTER THE FIGHTING, SOLDIERS FOUND THE BLACK FLAGS OF ISIS”



A Moro rebel prays with his M16 within reach



US Army instructors oversee Philippines army soldiers during helicopter insert and extract training

2003

The founder and leader of the MILF, Hashim Salamat, passes away and is replaced by Al Haj Murrad Ebrahim, who seeks to legitimise the battered rebel army and discuss peace.

2004

Having become a household name for its high-profile kidnapping of Western tourists, the notorious Abu Sayyaf from Basilan orchestrates the bombing of a crowded passenger vessel, which kills hundreds.

2008

The MILF agrees to a partial autonomy deal called the 'Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain', which sets the stage for a new autonomous Muslim region governed by them.

2011

President Aquino and his staff meet with the MILF leadership in Tokyo to herald a new round of peace talks. Three years of negotiations follow.



2015

An elite police unit is wiped out in the village of Mamasapano, a known MILF stronghold. The outcry over the botched raid ruins the chances of a new peace deal with the MILF.



APCs and armoured cars are a common sight in Mindanao's highways, where the military does its own police work



monochrome heyday of Philippine cinema, hailed the victory by celebrating with the troops.

The other secret war

During the last week of May 2016, the Philippine army fought another rebel group that had established a fortified camp in Lanao del Sur, an impoverished province known as a MILF stronghold. But the militants holed up outside Bitug, who lasted days under relentless artillery and air strikes, were a different variety of rebel. When examining the corpses after the fighting, soldiers found the black flags of ISIS.

The Philippine military had spent the previous year denying any infiltration by the Islamic State group in Mindanao. It seemed ludicrous to assume Daesh, as it is referred to in colloquial Arabic, would extend its network all the way to the Philippines.

After the Lanao del Sur campaign, it appeared a new enemy had risen from the smouldering chaos of Mindanao and it was immune to overtures of peace and compromise. The first shred of evidence suggesting ISIS encroachment into Moroland was dubious at best. In mid-2014, a known militant linked to the Abu Sayyaf posted videos praising ISIS. In July 2016, a panel of clerics announced they were taking over the BIFF – the splinter group hostile to Manila's peace plans – not to steer it towards radicalism, but save it from extremists.

Modern terrorism has deep roots in the Philippines, where political violence is the foremost recourse for settling local power struggles. Radical Islamist terrorism had its first tremors in the 1990s, when 9/11 planner Khalid Sheik Mohammed and bomb expert Ramzi Yousef sojourned in the Philippines.

In the mid-2000s, militants from Indonesia, including those behind the Bali night club bombing in 2002, were believed to be at large and enjoying the patronage of local rebels. This is an embarrassing conundrum for both the MILF and MNLF, since it belies their Bangsamoro ideals and places them in league with Al-Qaeda and its vicious off-shoots.

A substantial body of scholarly and journalistic literature examines another phenomenon spreading across the war-torn parts of Mindanao. Since 2002, American Special Forces in Mindanao have conducted missions without oversight or accountability. Although the US military has used the Philippines as a base for more than 100 years, in 1992 permanent facilities were abandoned, including the naval station in Subic and the massive Clark air base.

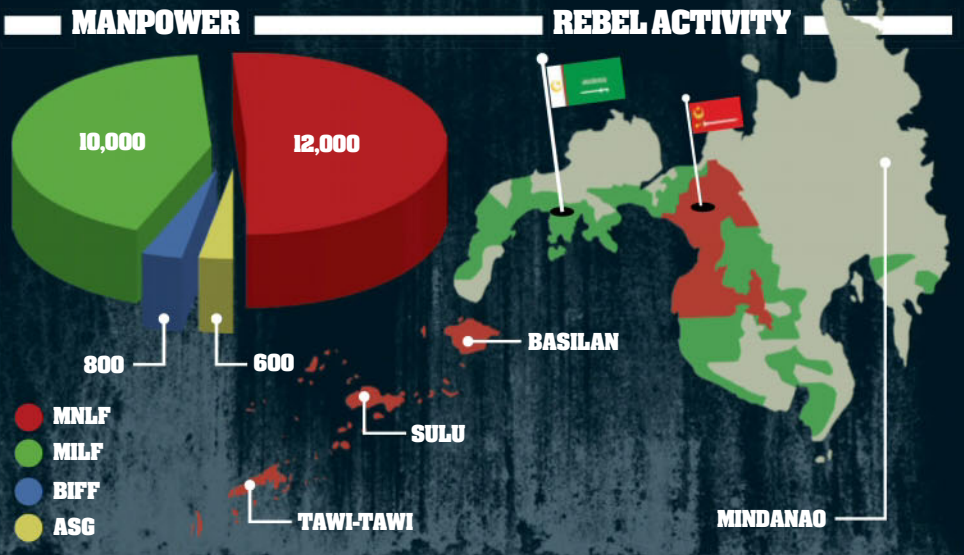
In 2013, the Philippine government agreed to the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Rather than allow for a full, permanent return of the US Air Force and Navy, it grants limited sharing rights for joint facilities. The ulterior motive for this was US assistance in Manila's ongoing dispute in its West Philippine Sea – waters at risk of being lost to Chinese encroachment. When the EDCA was ratified in 2015, it included a shared air base in northern Mindanao that looked well-suited for movement of US Special Forces. It isn't a too controversial allegation, since the US embassy is open about the existence of the Joint Special Task Force-Philippines (JSTF-P) dedicated to humanitarian outreach.

Having been torn apart by revolution, Mindanao is now an exotic theatre for the never-ending war on terror.

COUNTING THE REBELS

The rebels of the southern Philippines are prone to making exaggerated claims. Foremost are mind-boggling numbers; the MNLF insists on 100,000 men-at-arms, whereas the MILF boasts of a vast arsenal reaching 100,000 guns. The reality is borderline unflattering. The MILF

insurgency, for example, is spread over a small area of Mindanao. The group's actual numbers could be even smaller after the split with the BIFF in 2013. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), on the other hand, is a small-time kidnap-for-ransom outfit masquerading as a group of ardent jihadis.



2016

The Philippine army besieges a camp run by ISIS-linked militants in Lanao del Sur province – a historic stronghold of Moro resistance and concludes its operations by the end of May.

2016

A month after assuming office, newly elected President Rodrigo Duterte promises to uphold a ceasefire with the MILF and MNLF and salvage the previous administration's efforts at granting autonomy.

Images: Alamy, FreevectorMaps.com, Getty, Textures.com

Operator's Handbook

This well-armed heavy bomber was the mainstay of US efforts to pound Germany into submission during World War II

WORDS TOM GARNER



B-17

FLYING FORTRESS

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

MANUFACTURER: BOEING

ROLE: HEAVY BOMBER

INITIAL YEAR OF SERVICE: 1938

WING SPAN: 31.6 METRES (103 FEET 9 INCHES)

LENGTH: 22.6 METRES (74 FEET 4 INCHES)

HEIGHT: 5.8 METRES (19 FEET 1 INCH)

MAXIMUM SPEED: 462 KILOMETRES PER HOUR (287 MILES PER HOUR)

MAXIMUM RANGE: 3,219 KILOMETRES (2,000 MILES)

POWERPLANT: 4X WRIGHT R-1820-97 CYCLONE AIR-COOLED RADIAL ENGINES

ARMAMENT: 13X 50-CAL. MACHINE GUNS, 7,983 KILOGRAMS (17,600 POUNDS) OF BOMBS

CREW: 8-10

During World War II, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress was the American equivalent of the British Avro Lancaster. Designed as a fast, high-flying bomber that could ably defend itself, the B-17 was the mainstay of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF), particularly in Europe, where it served in very large numbers in the 15th Air Force in the Mediterranean and, most famously, for the Eighth Air Force in Europe.

The B-17's role in the European theatre has largely come to symbolise the continental air war. From 1942, Eighth Air Force launched increasingly large bombing missions to destroy Germany's ability to wage war through daylight raids. Massed formations of hundreds of B-17s flew endless sorties to destroy German industrial, transportation and communication

targets. Of the 1.5 million tons of bombs that were dropped over Europe by American aircraft, about 640,000 tons were dropped by B-17s in the attempt to rip the heart out of Germany's industrial production.

70 per cent of Berlin alone was destroyed by the efforts of Eighth Air Force and the RAF. However, flying by day in B-17s came at a terrible price. Of the 12,531 that were built, 4,754 were lost during the war, either through combat or accidents. This gave the B-17 a wartime loss rate of 37 per cent, and of the approximately 250,000 men who experienced flying in them across all theatres, 46,500 were killed or wounded. Nonetheless, the sheer number and ferocity of B-17 attacks led the US commander of Strategic Air Forces in Europe Carl Spaatz to reflect that, "...without the B-17, we might have lost the war."

Built in 1945, this surviving B-17G is displayed in the Bomber Hall of RAF Museum London

"THE B-17'S ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN THEATRE HAS LARGELY COME TO SYMBOLISE THE CONTINENTAL AIR WAR"



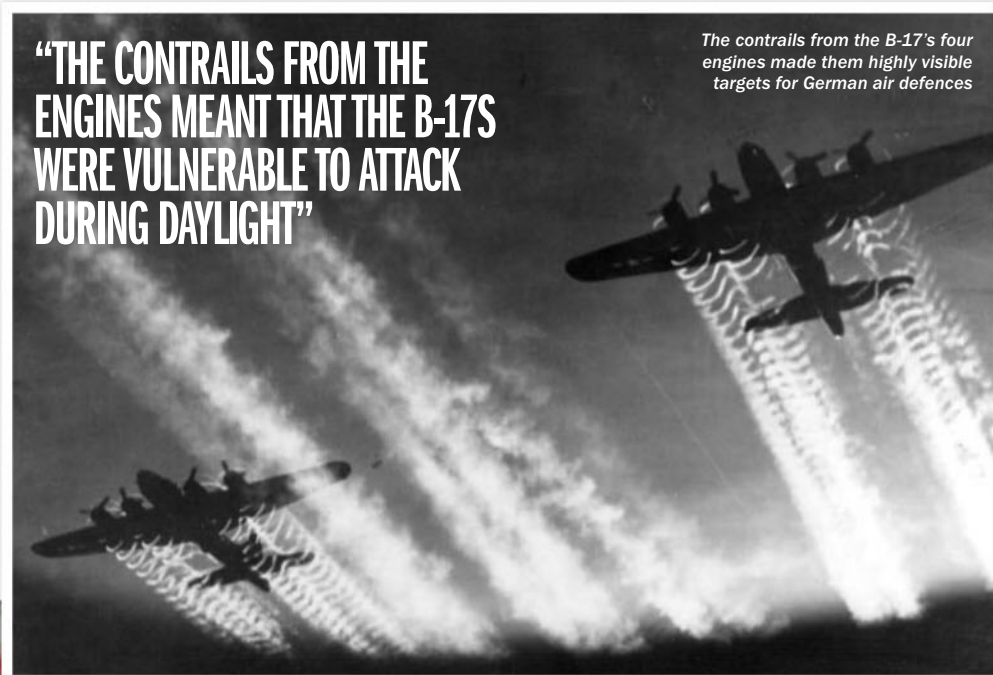
A group of B-17 planes in formation over Germany in April 1945. B-17s flew in 'box' formations to theoretically enable them to defend themselves without fighter support

ENGINES

The B-17 is a four-engine bomber, equipped with large Wright Cyclone air-cooled radial engines, capable of achieving speeds of 462 kilometres per hour and a range of 3,219 kilometres.

The contrails from the engines meant that the B-17s were vulnerable to attack during daylight, however their reliability meant that the bombers could return to base on just two engines, if the others were damaged during combat. Some aircraft even managed to land with the wheels up and on one engine.

Below: Formations of over 850 US bombers would routinely fly over Europe in the daytime to destroy Germany's war effort



The contrails from the B-17's four engines made them highly visible targets for German air defences

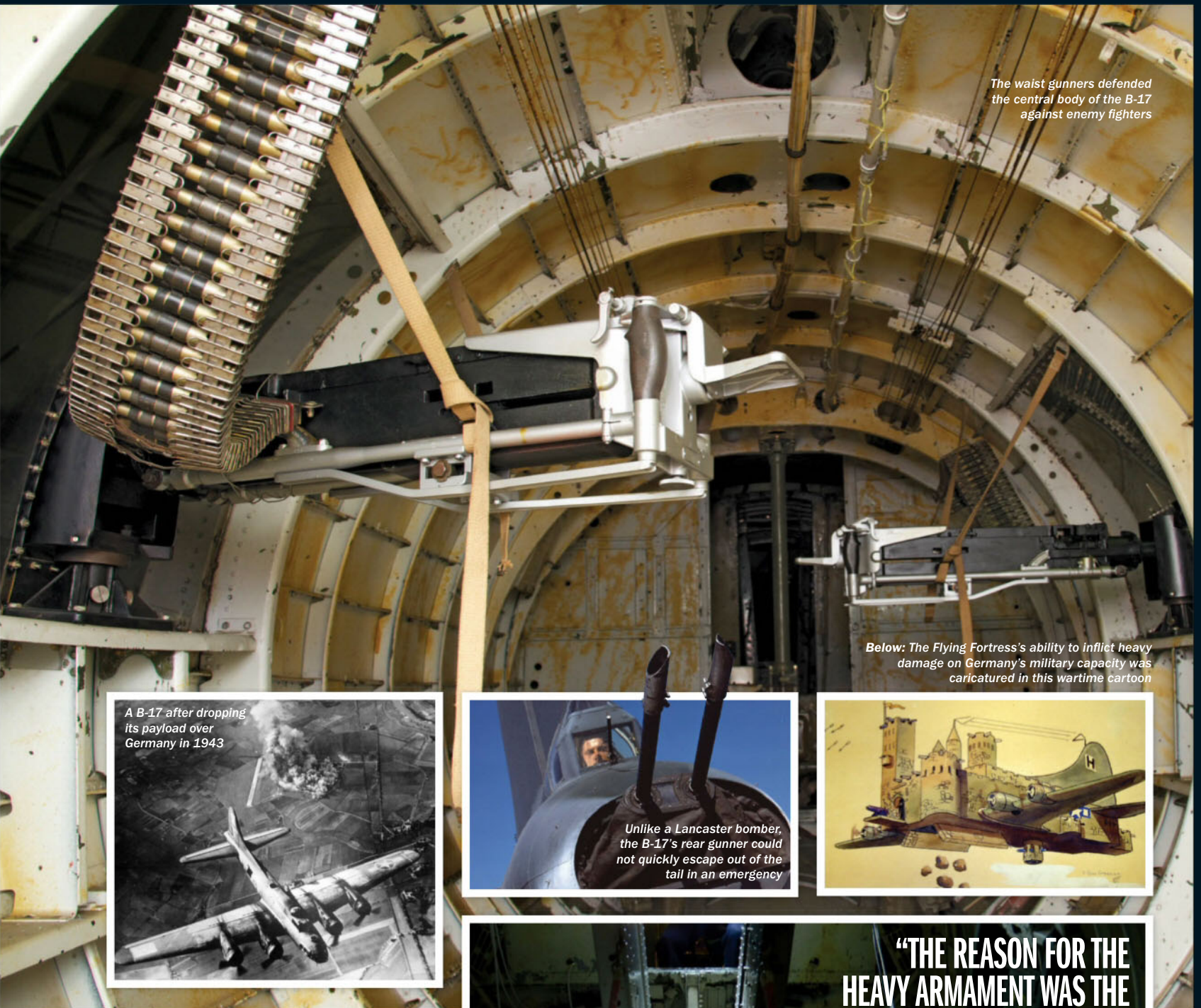


The B-17 could theoretically fly and land on one or two engines if the others were damaged in combat



Left: B-17s were equipped with reliable Wright R-1820 Cyclone radial air-cooled engines. First produced in 1931, these engines remained in production until the 1950s

The waist gunners defended the central body of the B-17 against enemy fighters



Below: The Flying Fortress's ability to inflict heavy damage on Germany's military capacity was caricatured in this wartime cartoon



A B-17 after dropping its payload over Germany in 1943



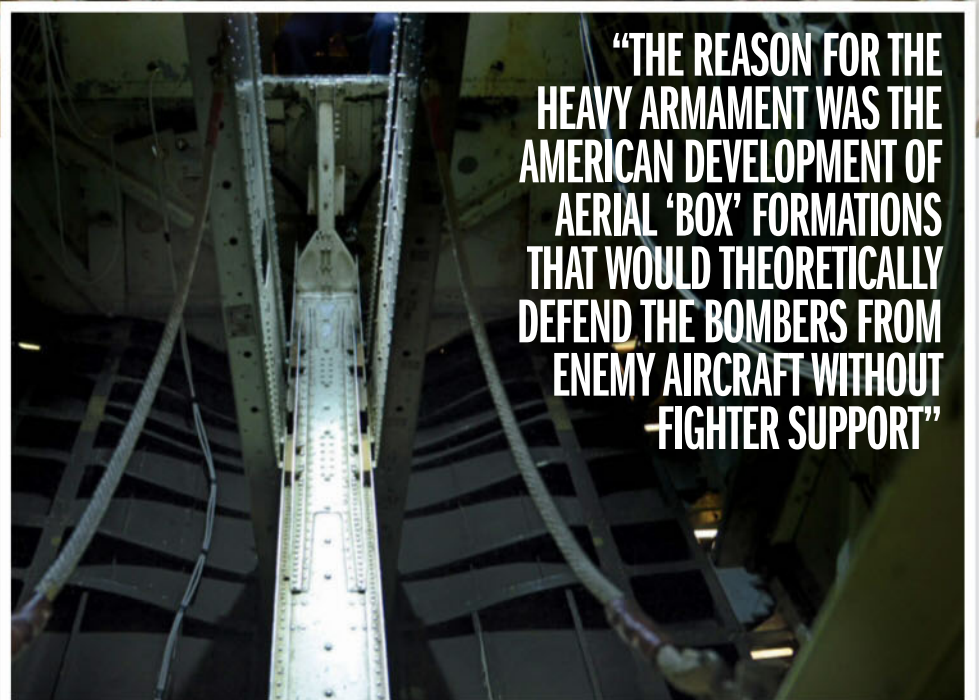
Unlike a Lancaster bomber, the B-17's rear gunner could not quickly escape out of the tail in an emergency



ARMAMENT

Designed as a heavy bomber, the B-17 could carry a maximum load of 13,000 pounds of bombs, but on an average mission it carried around 4,000 pounds to balance with the fuel capacity. The explosives varied from iron bombs, dumb bombs and incendiaries. The B-17 was defended by 13 .50-calibre machine guns in various positions, including chin and upper turrets and a rear gunner. The reason for the heavy armament was the American development of aerial 'box' formations that would theoretically defend the bombers from enemy aircraft without fighter support. In reality, that was not practical, and US fighter support became an increasing feature of bomber missions.

Right: To access the flight deck from the main fuselage, crew members had to squeeze through the bomb bay on a narrow walkway



“THE REASON FOR THE HEAVY ARMAMENT WAS THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT OF AERIAL ‘BOX’ FORMATIONS THAT WOULD THEORETICALLY DEFEND THE BOMBERS FROM ENEMY AIRCRAFT WITHOUT FIGHTER SUPPORT”

The ball turret was a monstrous little chamber from which escape was virtually impossible

“THE MOST DANGEROUS ROLE IN THE B-17 WAS MANNING THE BALL TURRET”



BALL TURRET

The most dangerous role in the B-17 was manning the ball turret. Located on the underside of the fuselage, the turret was fitted with two .50 calibre machine guns and could rotate 360 degrees around and 180 degrees to aim the guns. Enemy aircraft flying below would often target the turret, meaning nobody volunteered to man it. The gunner tended to be the smallest crewmember and he would sit in a foetal position on a canvas strap and place his feet on heel placements. There were handles to operate and revolve the turret, but this nightmarish box was so small that the gunner couldn't wear a parachute.

Right: *The cramped interior was exposed to enemy fighter gunfire and there was no room for a parachute*





FLIGHT DECK

The flight deck of the B-17 had a high position, but it was thinly armoured with only an aluminium skin protecting it, although some of the seats would have been armour-plated. The seats were arranged in an almost armchair position and there were thick pads for the rudder pedals in an attempt to make the aircraft more comfortable. The cockpit is located between the engines and during combat this already noisy atmosphere would have been deafening. In a common design feature for the time, the B-17 had an astrodome and small chamber in front of the cockpit, which housed the navigator and bombardier.



Above: The cockpit had an excellent viewing platform with a thin aluminium skin

The vulnerability of the flight deck is amply demonstrated by this B-17 that was heavily damaged after a raid on Cologne in 1944



The astrodome was located forward of the cockpit



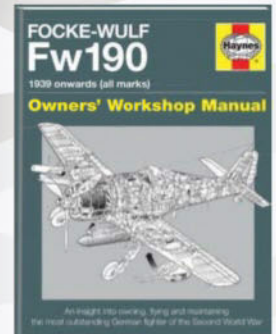
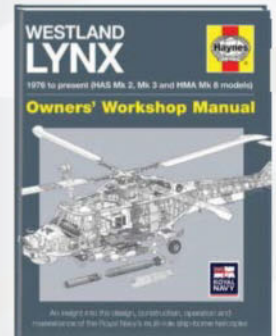
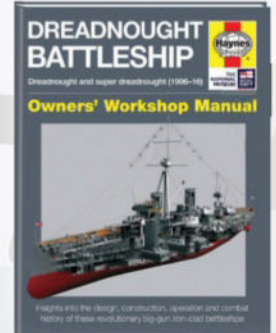
A B-17G after taking a direct flak hit over Kranenburg, Germany. Only the pilot of the aircraft survived

ROYAL AIR FORCE museum

The pictured B-17G is exhibited in the RAF Museum, London. For more, visit www.rafmuseum.org.uk



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HIMMLER'S NAZI CAMELOT

The SS-Reichsführer's obsession with occult ideas was a life-long pursuit. If anything, the truth is far stranger than fiction

WORDS ROBERT WALSH

While *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* and *The Last Crusade* would have us believe Hitler's henchmen were constantly busy scouring the world for historical and religious artefacts to satisfy a Nazi obsession with the occult, there is a portion of fact behind this Hollywood fiction. Many leading Nazis did have an obsession with the occult, and sent archaeological expeditions to different countries searching for, among other artefacts, the Holy Grail. Nazi ideology and symbols also drew heavily from religions and philosophies long pre-dating Christianity, a religion Himmler personally loathed.

From his youth, Himmler was fascinated by ancient beliefs, folk tales and legends – such as King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table and their quest for the Holy Grail. He's also known to have had limited contact with the Thule Society, a German nationalist and occultist group. In March 2016, his collection of books on occult practices and witchcraft was rediscovered, lying forgotten in a depot of the National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague, though the 13,000 volumes have yet to be fully examined. His interest in witchcraft was perhaps as much personal as it was ideological, as allegedly one of his ancestors was burned at the stake for practicing it.

Hitler's more casual interest in Norse mythology, pseudo-science and the Aryan ideal may be more commonly known, but Himmler's beliefs were so fervent that even Hitler once described them as "nonsense." Himmler even believed himself to be descended from King Heinrich I, a Germanic monarch also known as the Fowler. His personal quarters were decorated to commemorate his alleged ancestor, with whom Himmler supposedly held regular conversations via mediums.

"An aristocracy of soul and blood"

Himmler's quest was to establish a Nazi quasi-religion based on pagan Norse, Teutonic and Aryan ideas, blended within Nazi ideology and virulently anti-Christian. To Himmler, Christianity flourished by stealing symbols and ideas from older belief systems and incorporating them.

Like any faith, it needed a spiritual seat similar to the Vatican or Mecca. To that end, Himmler chose Wewelsburg castle in Westphalia to be 'Der Mittelpunkt der Welt', 'The Centre of the World'. Wewelsburg would, in Himmler's plans, only be one small part of a vast complex devoted to his new quasi-religion. The castle would become not only the Nazi spiritual centre, but the focus of "an aristocracy of soul and blood." It represented, in his eyes, the founding of a new faith by reclaiming ideas and symbols stolen by an old one.

Especially highly favoured members received a special Death's Head ring, or Totenkopfring, presented by Himmler personally at the castle. Himmler ordered that any ring whose owner died, retired or was dismissed from the SS should be returned to Wewelsburg for storage in a specially constructed crypt named simply Der Gruft (The Vault) or Der Weihehalle (Consecration Hall).

What happened to the approximately 11,500 rings has never been ascertained, and if they were returned to Wewelsburg, they vanished before the castle was captured by American troops in April 1945. One suggestion is that shortly before the castle fell, the chest of rings was removed, hidden in a local cave and the entrance blasted shut.

Himmler had overall control of the Wewelsburg project, but he drew great inspiration from two men: Karl Maria Wiligut and Otto Rahn. As a leading expert in Grail

"MANY LEADING NAZIS REALLY DID HAVE AN OBSESSION WITH THE OCCULT, AND SENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS TO MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES SEARCHING FOR, AMONG OTHER ARTEFACTS, THE HOLY GRAIL"

myths, Rahn travelled the world leading numerous expeditions before the outbreak of the war. However, Rahn wasn't pro-Nazi, and served in the SS only to placate Himmler. Rahn would later attempt to justify himself, saying: "A man has to eat. What was I supposed to do? Turn Himmler down?"

As it was, Rahn would incur Himmler's displeasure anyway. Being openly gay, consorting with known anti-Nazis and not actually finding the Grail saw him become increasingly frustrated and disillusioned with Himmler and the party. Himmler, meanwhile, was becoming increasingly frustrated and disillusioned with Rahn, who was posted away from Wewelsburg in 1938 and reduced to being a guard at Dachau concentration camp. He left the SS in 1939 and fled, only to die mysteriously in the Austrian Tyrol.

It's been suggested that Gestapo agents were responsible, either to silence Rahn permanently or for affronting Himmler by leaving the SS. Granted, murder was Himmler's business, but Rahn was depressed and could have taken his own life. In the end, the death was ruled suicide.

While Rahn was relatively straightforward, Wiligut was altogether stranger. As obsessed with myths and legends as Himmler, the two had something else in common. While Himmler believed himself a descendant of Heinrich the Fowler, Wiligut claimed he was the descendant of the Germanic god Wotan. He also had a history of violence and mental health problems, having once been confined to a psychiatric hospital, but Himmler nonetheless promoted him to SS-Brigadeführer. Wiligut even designed the Totenkopfring.

Such was Wiligut's influence, that authors Hans-Jurgen Lange and Rudolf Mund nicknamed him 'Himmler's Rasputin', referencing the Mad Monk's dark hold over some members of the Russian royal family. Despite his ties to Himmler, Wiligut still fell from grace. He was unpopular among his colleagues at Wewelsburg and, in 1938, senior SS officer Karl Wolff exposed his confinement to a psychiatric hospital.

Now an embarrassment, Wiligut was forcibly retired (officially due to age and ill-health) on 28

HIMMLER'S NAZI CAMELOT

*Heinrich Luitpold
Himmler, pictured
here as Reichsführer
of the Schutzstaffel
(SS), was obsessed
with the occult*



HIMMLER'S NAZI CAMELOT

August 1939, only days before the outbreak of war. It was allegedly Wiligut who had suggested Wewelsburg to Himmler in the first place and development of the site continued without him.

The castle itself is triangular, resembling a spearhead, pointing north towards areas where pagan Norse and Germanic tribes lived. The shape mattered to Himmler, as the Nazis adored martial imagery of all kinds. If completed, the entire Wewelsburg compound would have resembled a vast spear with the castle itself as the tip.

Its location was also important to Himmler, especially while under Wiligut's bizarre influence. According to folklore, Wewelsburg is near where Germanic tribes wiped out three Roman legions in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. After the battle, the numbers of the three legions were retired from the Roman army permanently. The exact location, however, has never been absolutely confirmed.

Another Westphalian folk story claims Wewelsburg is also near the site of the Battle of the Birch Tree, where a great army from the east was supposedly destroyed by an army from the west – a neat parallel for the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

Had the castle been completed, nearby villages would have been razed and their inhabitants relocated. Their homes would have been replaced by an SS barracks, a villa complex for senior officers, a residential area for workers and scientists and farmsteads for food production.

The complex would still resemble a spearhead, surrounded by buildings and large artificially created lakes. It would even have its own airport, shuttling senior scientists and officers to and from their studies and conferences.

Every part of the castle reflected Himmler's obsession with occult symbolism. Many rooms were named after mythological figures such as King Arthur and Heinrich the Fowler. One part of the castle, however, displayed a particular devotion to Himmler's new creed: the North Tower. A special crypt in the North Tower was intended to house the ashes of the 12 most senior SS officers, acknowledging Himmler's belief that they were latter-day Knights of the Round Table.

The crypt did (and still does today) look particularly sinister. Dimly lit, a large swastika adorns the ceiling. 12 plinths still await the urns of Himmler's most senior 'knights'. On the floor, a circular hole was intended to burn an eternal flame in their memory. Reflecting his disdain for Himmler's obsessions, Hitler never visited Wewelsburg.

Another room became the 'Hall of Supreme Generals', a meeting place for Himmler and

“WHILE HIMMLER BELIEVED HIMSELF A DESCENDANT OF ‘HEINRICH THE FOWLER’, WILIGUT CLAIMED HE WAS THE DESCENDANT OF THE GERMANIC GOD WOTAN”



Himmler had places of Christian worship turned into more sinister purposes. He is pictured leaving Quedlinburg Abbey after it was converted into a shrine for Henry I

WEWELSBURG

THE CENTRE OF THE NAZI WORLD

WEWELSBURG WOULD, IN HIMMLER'S FEVERED IMAGINATION, BECOME THE EPICENTRE OF HIS NEW RELIGION. HIS DREAMS CAME NOWHERE NEAR THE REALITY

Wewelsburg has had fortifications since the 9th century. The castle has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt during wars and peasant rebellions and several times during the Thirty Years' War. Its current 'spearhead' form appeared in 1603, slowly declining and becoming derelict until another restoration in 1924. Himmler leased it from local officials in 1934, on a nominal rent of one Reichsmark per year.

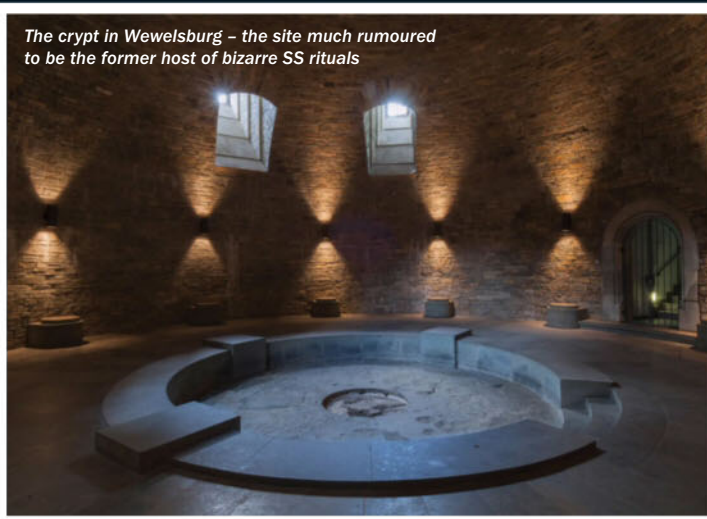
Originally intended for ideological indoctrination of SS officers, Wewelsburg became increasingly devoted to Himmler's occultism. Funding was lavish,

with a budget of some 250 million Reichsmarks set aside. Volunteer workers remodelled it from 1934, until Niederhagen started providing slave labour in 1941. The purpose of Wewelsburg was also increasingly shrouded in secrecy; Himmler strictly forbid publication of any details from 1939 onward.

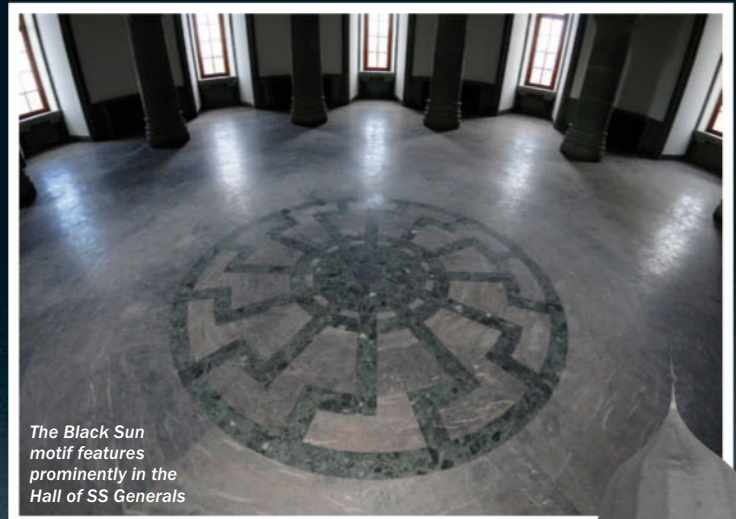
The end came on 3 April 1945, when American troops arrived. SS troops led by Sturmbannführer (major) Heinz Macher (later captured with Himmler, their false identities exposed) tried to destroy the castle. Macher, woefully short of demolition equipment and commanding only 15 men, only

started a severe fire. The castle's commandant, Obergruppenführer Siegfried Taubert, had fled on 30 March. The castle was, according to local citizens, looted after its abandonment.

Today, it is one of Germany's most popular museums. Restored again in 1948-49, the former SS guardhouse became the Wewelsburg 1933-45: Cult and Terror-State of the SS Museum in 1982. In 2010, the Wewelsburg 1933-45 Memorial Museum opened. Thankfully, despite fears that they might regard it as a shrine, today's neo-Nazis seldom visit.



The crypt in Wewelsburg – the site much rumoured to be the former host of bizarre SS rituals



The Black Sun motif features prominently in the Hall of SS Generals

Wewelsburg, the 'SS Order Castle', was intended to be the home to Heinrich Himmler's quasi-religious 'SS Order of the Death's Head'

"THE PURPOSE OF WEWELSBURG WAS ALSO INCREASINGLY SHROUDED IN SECRECY; HIMMLER STRICTLY FORBID PUBLICATION OF ANY DETAILS FROM 1939 ONWARD"

his most senior officers. It was very seldom used, although they met between 12 June and 15 June 1941 to plan SS involvement in the invasion of the Soviet Union, including the notorious Einsatzgruppen, who murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews, gypsies and Communist Party functionaries as they swept eastward on the heels of the Wehrmacht.

In the hall, a large mosaic representing the Black Sun – an occult symbol unique to the SS but believed to be drawn from earlier mythology – dominates the floor. The lines of the Wewelsburg Schwarze Sonne can be de-constructed into either three swastikas or twelve reversed Sig runes.

Many rooms were oak-panelled, the wood being particularly important in Norse mythology. Rooms were decorated with art and sculptures representing Nazi ideas, but also their occult and historical significance. Prehistoric and other historical relics also adorned the castle, collected by Nazi archaeological expeditions.

Residents of Wewelsburg were to be so deeply immersed in Himmler's new religion that even the tableware was custom-made, bearing various runes and occult symbols. Had the project been completed, it would have been a cult compound of which Jim Jones or David Koresh could only have dreamed.

The Ahnenerbe (short for 'Ancestral Heritage Research and Teaching Society') was based at Wewelsburg from 1935 onwards. Founded to catalogue and research archaeological, cultural and historical aspects of Nazism, it placed particular emphasis on myths, legends and folklore, provided they might plausibly be woven into Himmler's SS cult-lore.

Ahnenerbe's founders held, to put it mildly, some interesting ideas. Hermann Wirth was a Dutch historian obsessed with the theory of Atlantis (in 1938, he claimed to Himmler that he had actually found it), while senior Nazi Richard Walther Darré also ran the society.

Ahnenerbe expeditions visited Tibet, Karelia, Italy, Sweden, New Swabia, Western Eurasia

“IN HIMMLER’S IMAGINATION, THE CASTLE WOULD BE ONLY ONE PART OF SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER. HAD IT BEEN COMPLETED, NEARBY VILLAGES WOULD HAVE BEEN RAZED AND THEIR INHABITANTS RELOCATED”

and all over Germany before the war. Even after war broke out, expeditions still visited Poland, Ukraine, Crimea and France. Eventually both Wirth and Darré fell into disfavour.

Darré was forced to resign from the Ahnenerbe in 1938, a victim of internal feuding. Wirth was increasingly sidelined from 1937 onwards, eventually leaving in 1939. Their positions went to people more subservient to Himmler and ultimately to Himmler himself.

Both held SS rank but Wirth was never an enthusiastic Nazi. Darré, however, was one of Himmler's most senior leaders.

Another less well-known research and acquisition unit was the mysterious SonderKommando H – the H standing for Hexe (witch). The unit was founded in 1935 along with the Ahnenerbe, and little is known about it other than its primary function: to acquire texts relating to witchcraft, the occult and sorcery. All of these acquired texts were to be studied and stored at Wewelsburg.

As Hitler aimed to build a 'Thousand Year Reich', Himmler intended his religion to long outlive him. Ultimately, both men were disappointed. After a defeat at Stalingrad, and with the Nazis firmly on the defensive, the project was largely abandoned. An order from

Hitler saw resources and funding diverted to arms production and other projects more useful to the war effort.

The nearby concentration camp at Niederhagen, founded in 1941 to provide slave labour for Wewelsburg, closed in 1943. Niederhagen was Nazi Germany's smallest camp, holding about 3,900 prisoners. Even so, some 1,285 inmates died from disease, over-work and maltreatment, while the Gestapo executed another 56.

Himmler was captured and identified despite posing as Geheime Feldpolizei (secret field police) Sergeant Heinrich Hitzinger. The Geheime Feldpolizei was on the list of Nazi organisations whose members were to be detained on sight. Facing trial and execution, he swallowed cyanide on 23 May 1945. By then, the architect of the Nazi religion had even broken faith with Hitler by trying to secretly broker an armistice with the Allies. Hitler's successor, Grand Admiral Karl Donitz, dismissed Himmler from all posts on 6 May, two days before VE Day.

It's a bitter irony that Himmler, architect of the Holocaust, was entrusted with building national socialism's new Jerusalem. But there's one other irony only slightly less bitter. For all Himmler's obsessive interest in mysticism, myth, omens and the occult, Wehrmacht soldiers' belt buckles still bore the words 'Gott mit uns' (God with us).

FURTHER READING

- HEINRICH HIMMLER'S CAMELOT: THE WEWELSBURG IDEOLOGICAL CENTER OF THE SS, 1934-1945 BY STEPHEN COOK, 1999
- DER SS-TOTENKOPFRING 5TH EDITION BY KLAUS D PATZWALL, 2010
- THE OCCULT ROOTS OF NAZISM: THE ARIOSOPHISTS OF AUSTRIA AND GERMANY, 1890-1935 BY NICHOLAS GOODRICK CLARK, 1985

The Death's Head Ring

Known as the Death's Head Ring or SS Honour Ring, this was presented to especially highly-favoured SS members by Himmler in ceremonies at Wewelsburg. It incorporates the death's head, several different runes and the wearer's SS membership number on the inside.



Above: Himmler committed suicide in British custody on 23 May 1945 after trying to broker a secret peace

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HISTORY of WAR **REVIEWS**

The latest military history offerings from the shelf, screen and cinema

KILLING DR DEATH

THE AMAZING TRUE STORY OF THE DEATH SQUAD THAT TRACKED DOWN AND KILLED A NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

Writer: Danny Baz **Publisher** John Blake **Price:** £7.99 **Released:** Out now

A SENSATIONAL AND UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCOUNT OF NAZI HUNTING IN THE EARLY 1980S THAT MIXES JAMES BOND GLAMOUR WITH MARVEL COMIC MELODRAMA

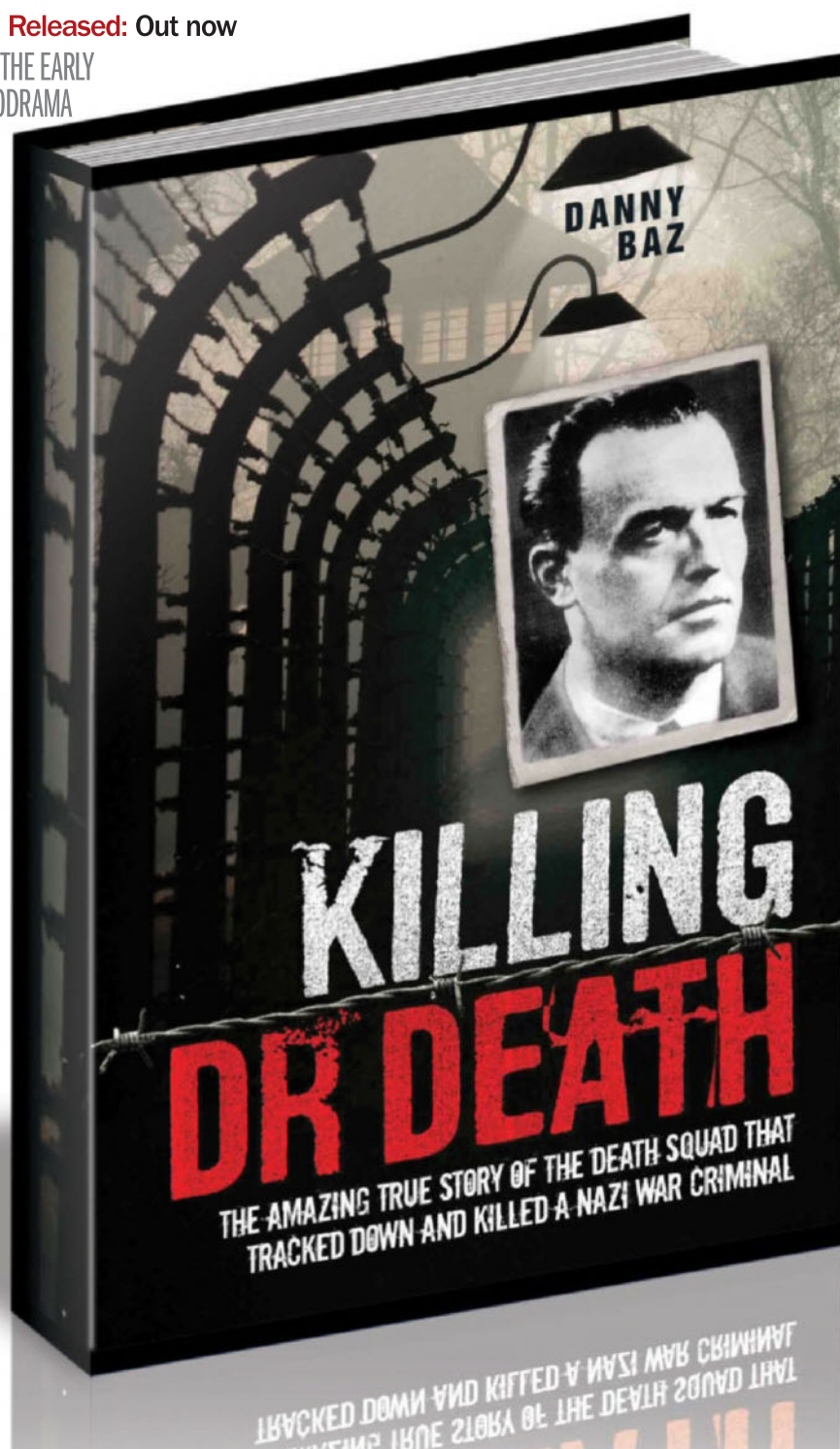
From its movie poster title to its ensemble cast of Nazis, secret agents and Vietnam vets, this is a story that could have been dreamt up by an over-imaginative Hollywood scriptwriter. Yet, if we are to believe its author, Danny Baz, it's all true.

The Dr Death of the book's title is Aribert Heim, an Austrian Nazi who, in 1941, earned his ghoulish nickname at Mauthausen Concentration Camp for a series of macabre 'operations' that he carried out on prisoners there. Unlike Auschwitz's infamous Dr Mengele, who used human guinea pigs to conduct warped scientific experiments, Heim's prime motivation seems to have been sadistic pleasure and, in any other context, he would have been rightly condemned as criminally insane.

Like so many Nazis at the end of the war, however, Heim escaped prosecution working as, of all things, a gynecologist in Germany until 1962 when he was rumbled and went on the run. He remains unaccounted for to this day and according to Baz, with very good reason. In 1982, the author claims, a covert cell of Jewish avengers known as The Owl – an organisation that Baz also insists he was a part of – secretly executed Heim.

Baz, a former Israeli Air Force colonel, has trotted this story out before in a book called *The Secret Executioners* in 2010. Then, as now, though, he offers scant evidence that his claims are anything other than 'pure fantasy', to quote Efraim Zuroff, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, which has long sought to bring Nazi fugitives to justice. So if you fancy a fanciful action thriller, then give this a go. For a superb history of Nazi war criminals, however, try hunting down the tragically out-of-print *Blind Eye To Murder* by Tom Bower instead, which unlike Baz's work utilises facts.

"THE DOCTOR DEATH OF THE BOOK'S TITLE IS ARIBERT HEIM, AN AUSTRIAN NAZI WHO, IN 1941, EARNED HIS GHOULISH NICKNAME AT MALTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP FOR A SERIES OF MACABRE 'OPERATIONS' THAT HE CARRIED OUT ON PRISONERS THERE"



BIRMINGHAM'S WAR VOICES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

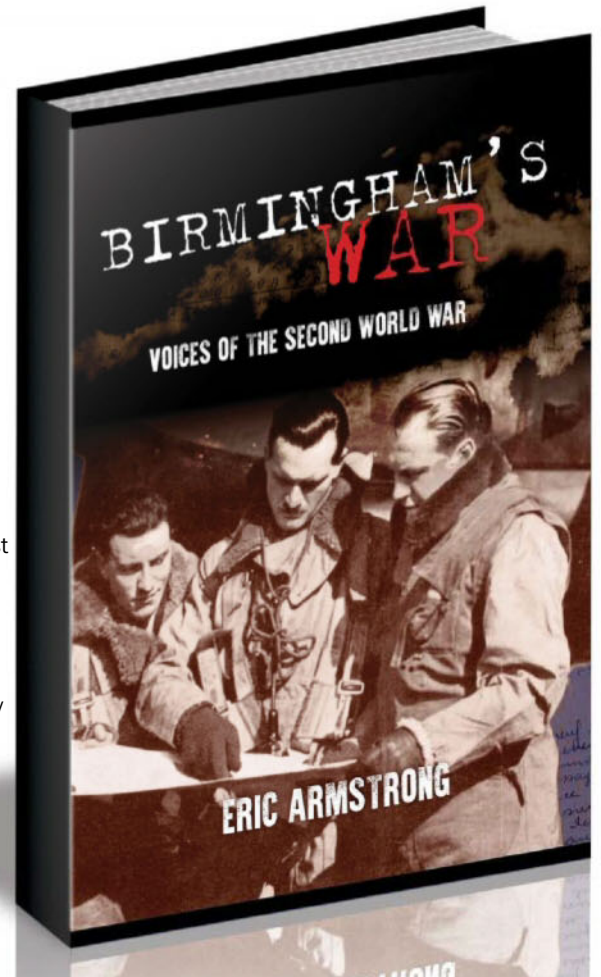
Writer: Eric Armstrong **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £12.99

THE EXPERIENCES OF A SINGLE WEST MIDLANDS PARISH, FIGHTING ALL OVER THE WORLD, BROUGHT TOGETHER IN A PATCHWORK OF SOCIAL HISTORY

In the modern era, the use of smartphones has made citizen journalists – amateur reporters who record newsworthy events as they unfold – a commonplace phenomenon, but it's not a new one. During World War II, the Congregational Church on Westminster Road, in Handsworth Birmingham, began printing a magazine called the *Westminster Chimes*. The idea was to provide a platform for local people to write about their experiences serving in the conflict. Over the next six years, about 100 of the church's congregation who found themselves serving in uniform, were invited to send in dispatches home, which the *Chimes* would then print.

The author of this book, Eric Armstrong, has studied this archive and distilled its contents into a fascinating slice of social history, which delivers – in slivers and snippets, like snatches of lost conversations – the course of the war from an entirely unique perspective.

The accounts begin in May 1940, when it was first decided to print the *Westminster Chimes*. Hitler's panzer divisions may have been sweeping through France by then, but there is a sense that the war was still very much beyond the horizon. Indeed, the earliest entries are more concerned with the local amateur football scene than they are falling bombs. However, the talk soon turns to barrage balloons and the Blitz, as the bombs inevitably fall. We then get accounts of the call up – the transition from civilian to military life – as the church's parishioners first train, and then fight, all over the planet. This may just be about how a single neighbourhood went to war, but the scope of the contributions is staggering. We get accounts from Egypt, the North Atlantic, Burma, the D-Day beachheads, aircraft carriers in the Med and even POW camps in the Nazi heartland. It is truly fascinating stuff.



HANDLEY PAGE HALIFAX OWNERS' WORKSHOP MANUAL

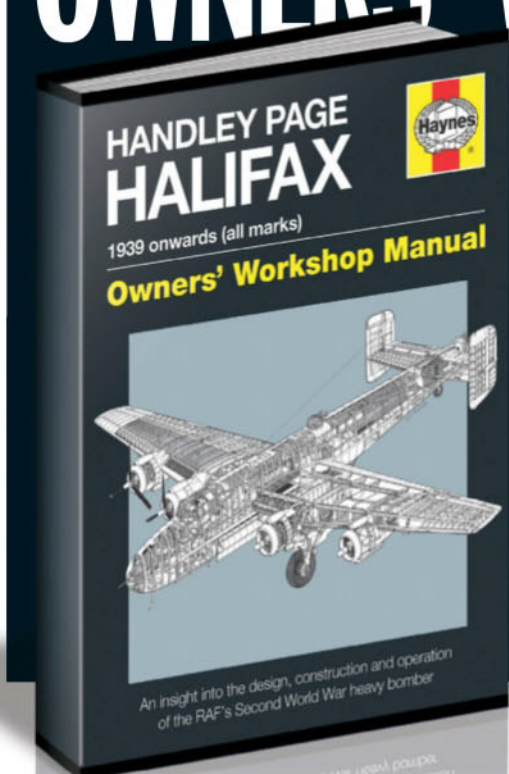
Writer: Jonathan Falcolner **Publisher:** Haynes Publishing
Price: £25 **Released:** Out now

A NATIONAL TREASURE GETS ITSELF A DEDICATED HISTORY COURTESY OF A BRITISH INSTITUTION – AND THE RESULTS ARE IMPECCABLE

The Haynes manuals are, of course, a British institution. Having built their reputation as a publisher with their series of automotive repair guides, they have, in recent years, expanded their repertoire to include more gimmicky ideas, like a book on the famous USS Enterprise (the space ship in *Star Trek* not the former US navy aircraft carrier) and Thomas the Tank Engine.

Their range also now includes manuals on a variety of World War II and post-World War II aircraft, including the Focke-Wulf FW190, the Westland Sea King Helicopter and this one, on the Handley Page Halifax. Of course the Owners' Workshop Manual part of the title is a just a bit of fun. If you do happen to have a Handley Page Halifax that needs doing up, don't expect this book to offer any practical advice about how to fix its wonky bomb doors or get its undercarriage working properly again. What you can expect, though, is a thoroughly engaging and comprehensive look at one of the Britain's key combat aircraft of World War II.

Despite ostensibly being a heavy bomber, the Halifax was used in huge variety of roles – much more so than its more famous cousin, the Avro Lancaster. As well as playing a significant role in Bomber Command's offensive against Germany's cities and industrial centres, the Halifax was also used to drop SOE agents behind enemy lines and tug glider-borne troops into battle. It was also employed extensively by Coastal Command to tackle the German U-Boat menace in the North Atlantic. This splendid book uncovers how its unique design and construction made it so operationally versatile. Packed with over 300 photographs as well as technical drawings, this is about as comprehensive a history of the Halifax as is possible to get.



ALL ABOUT HISTORY

RECOMMENDED READING



WHITE RAGE

In *White Rage*, Anderson details a US socio-political phenomenon that's so deep-seated it has barely registered in the collective consciousness of the layman – even this side of the millennium where the racial barriers are crumbling and the USA is supposed to be a land of equal opportunity for everyone. Anderson starts with the Thirteenth Amendment – the abolition of slavery in the US – and moves through post-civil war history showing that, for every time black Americans have made legitimate movements towards achieving equal rights, these opportunities have been sabotaged. Sometimes it's through creative application of the law and, far too frequently, through white-on-black violence.



BODYSNATCHERS: DIGGING UP THE UNTOLD STORIES OF BRITAIN'S RESURRECTION MEN

Suzie Lennox's new book takes readers back in time to the 18th and 19th centuries to dig up some stories of men that history has long since forgotten. While names such as Burke and Hare have become notorious, Lennox introduces us to plenty of lesser-known individuals who kept the anatomy schools provided with raw materials for almost a century. Thanks to these shadowy characters, medical students were never short of a cadaver to dissect and schools paid handsomely for the wares that the likes of Henry Gillies provided. With no questions asked, the bodysnatchers soon became figures of fear, moving by night and showing little respect to the British dead.



DADLAND: A JOURNEY INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY

For many of us, our first taste of history comes in the form of our parents and grandparents. Their stories open up a world of wartime heroes, fashion faux pas and a time before the internet. But what happens when that family member can no longer tell you those stories themselves, because they simply don't remember anymore? That is the sad reality in *Dadland* where author Carew attempts to unravel and reassemble the patchwork of memories that belong to her elderly father, a shadow of the man formerly known as Lawrence of Burma.



THE RADIUM GIRLS

Before the true knowledge of radium's power, the world looked upon it as a shining beacon of hope. Discovered in 1898, it became a vital ingredient for dials and instruments that would become invaluable to World War I. Hundreds of women were "doing their bit" to help, working day and night to paint these instruments and there was only one way to ensure that the most precious element on earth was not wasted: "dip, lip and paint."

The girls working in the studio were encouraged by their own accounts, to slip a radium-soaked brush between their lips to keep it fine. Little did they know that years later their health would decrease dramatically. *Radium Girls* is engaging and hugely informative showing that the struggles of the medical world went beyond the male soldiers injured in the war.

CAPTAIN CHARLES FRYATT

COURAGEOUS MARINER OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Writer: Ben Carver Publisher: Amberley Price: £12.99 Released: Out now

THIS GRIPPING ACCOUNT TELLS THE STORY OF THE HORRIFIC EXECUTION OF CAPTAIN CHARLES FRYATT

Illustrated with numerous photographs, this slim book provides an interesting account of one of the worst atrocities of World War I: the trial and execution of Captain Charles Fryatt. The master of the Great Eastern Railway ship *Brussels* was executed by the Germans on 27 July 1916 for attempting to ram the German submarine U33 earlier, in March 1915.

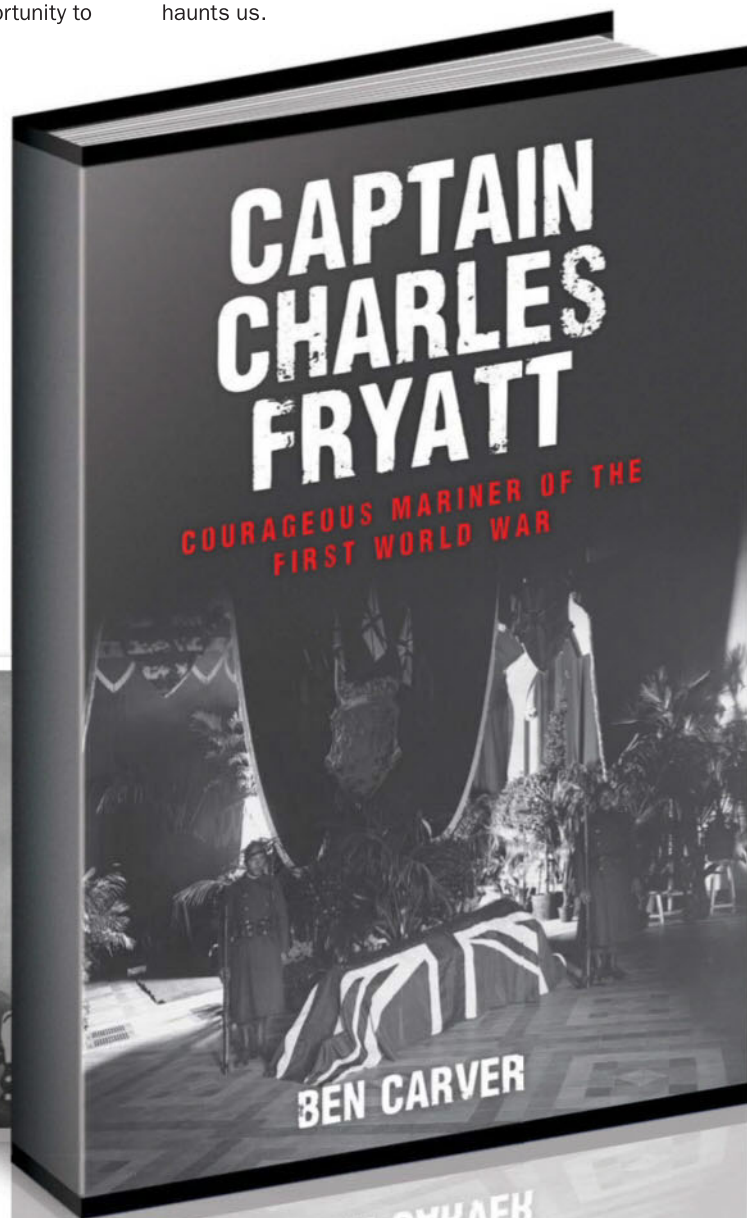
It gives a fascinating social history of Fryatt's upbringing and career: his capture by the Germans in June 1916; his brief show-trial and summary execution by firing squad; his burial alongside Belgian civilians also shot by the Germans and subsequent reburial with great ceremony in July 1919; and the numerous memorials in both Britain and Belgium dedicated to his memory. Like that of Edith Cavell in October 1915, Fryatt's execution caused international outrage but is a neglected subject. This book misses an opportunity to

rectify this, as there is little attempt to put his death, and the international reaction to it, into a wider context.

There is no discussion of recent research on German atrocities, both before and during World War I, notably the genocide in south-west Africa of 1904-07 and during the invasion of neutral Belgium in August 1914, which are seen as precursors to the holocaust of World War II and the ruthless suppression of any resistance by the Germans, notably in the Balkans and on the Eastern Front. Although the casualties were small compared to those inflicted by later atrocities, German attacks on the civilian population shocked contemporaries. The naval bombardment of English coastal towns, air raids by Zeppelins and Gothas, and unrestricted submarine warfare marked a new barbarism that now haunts us.

"THIS SLIM BOOK PROVIDES AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF ONE OF THE WORST ATROCITIES OF WORLD WAR I: THE TRIAL AND THE EXECUTION OF CAPTAIN CHARLES FRYATT"

A half-length studio portrait of Captain Charles Fryatt



WORLD WAR II 1942 AND HITLER'S SOFT UNDERBELLY

Studio: Simply Media **Running Time:** 90 mins **Price:** £19.99

AN ENGROSSING LOOK AT HOW A SUPPOSEDLY SOFT OPTION LED TO SOME OF THE HARDEST FIGHTING OF THE ENTIRE WAR

This two-part DVD is an entertaining attempt to answer a simple question: why did the British spend so much of the war paddling around the Mediterranean?

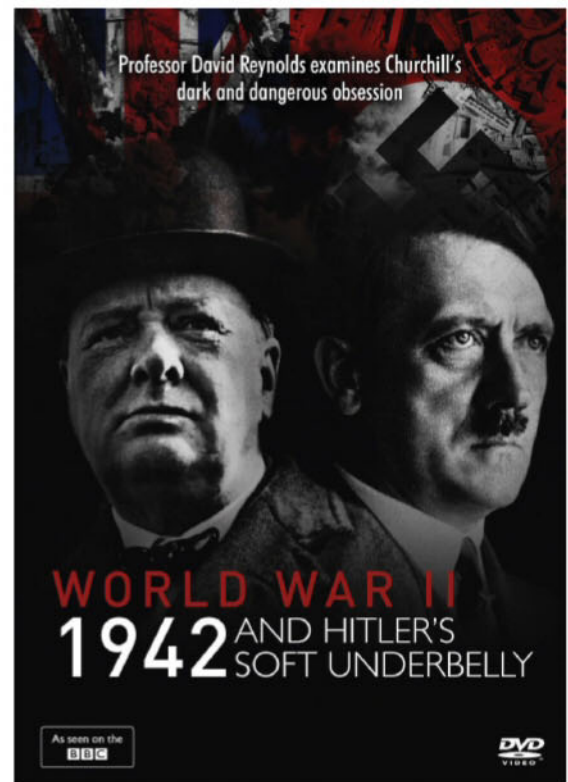
Although pressed for time in this two-episode format, Cambridge professor David Reynolds manages to present an unhurried appraisal of the military and political thinking behind the war in the Mediterranean. Borne out of Churchill's political insecurity and his doubts about the fighting ability of the British Army, the North African theatre was initially meant to be a relatively easy way of opening a second front against the Germans, who were being hard pressed by the Russians in the east.

However, rather than divert German forces to the region, it instead served to divert Allied armies as fighting became increasingly bitter and attritional,

especially when the focus switched to Italy (the subject of the second episode on this DVD). The brutal slogging match prompted a German general to say: "Next time you invade Italy, don't start at the bottom."

By the time of the five-month Battle of Monte Cassino, described by Reynolds as, "...the absurd culmination of the soft underbelly strategy," it was Churchill's weakness that had been exposed, rather than Hitler's.

Reynolds is an engaging host, with a deliberate delivery enlivened by many impersonations (including Churchill, Montgomery and Eisenhower), and although 90 minutes is insufficient to go into much depth on such a complex subject, this makes an excellent introduction and manages to consider a surprising number of elements to present a nuanced perspective.



“REYNOLDS IS AN ENGAGING HOST, WITH A DELIBERATE DELIVERY ENLIVENED BY MANY IMPERSONATIONS”

ANTHROPOID

THE STORY OF THE MOST HIGH-PROFILE NAZI ASSASSINATION OF WORLD WAR II, RE-TOLD ON THE BIG SCREEN

Director: Sean Ellis **Starring:** Cillian Murphy, Jamie Doran, Charlotte Le Bon **Release Date:** 9 September 2016

Occupied Czechoslovakia, 1942, two exiled soldiers, Jozef Gabčík (Cillian Murphy) and Jan Kubiš (Jamie Donan) have returned to their homeland to kill its most ruthless enemy: Reinhard Heydrich, the Butcher of Prague.

Rather than the sweeping panoramas and CG-saturated Hollywood action shots you might find in some WWII epics, here the filmmakers draw viewers into the dark recesses of the Czech resistance and the heroic stories of its members. Scenes are crammed into dingy safe houses and hushed back-room meetings, brimming with an atmosphere of suspicion, paranoia, and ever-present danger. The film captures the real threat under which resistance members and collaborators lived – one that is very shortly and brutally carried out in the film's final act.

It is clear that director Sean Ellis intended his narrative to focus on Prague and the incredible story of the men and women who resisted the Nazi occupation, rather than their nemesis Heydrich, and this is to be commended. As such, Ellis doesn't reveal his monster until the final quarter of the film and in fact, the Butcher himself is only on-screen for a very brief moment. This is during the climactic scene that, for those who already know the history of the operation, accurately re-creates all the intensity and chaos of the real events.

“THE FILM CAPTURES THE REAL THREAT UNDER WHICH RESISTANCE MEMBERS AND COLLABORATORS LIVED”

Inevitably, it's only during the final 40 or so minutes that the slow-paced backroom conspirators turn into Sten-toting resistance fighters, meaning those seeking a traditional bullet-flying war film will be disappointed. As a gritty thriller, however, *Anthropoid* does justice to the history, and is a fitting tribute to the Czech resistance. It will be interesting to see just how this interpretation compares with next year's *HhHh*, adapted from the acclaimed novel by Laurent Binet.





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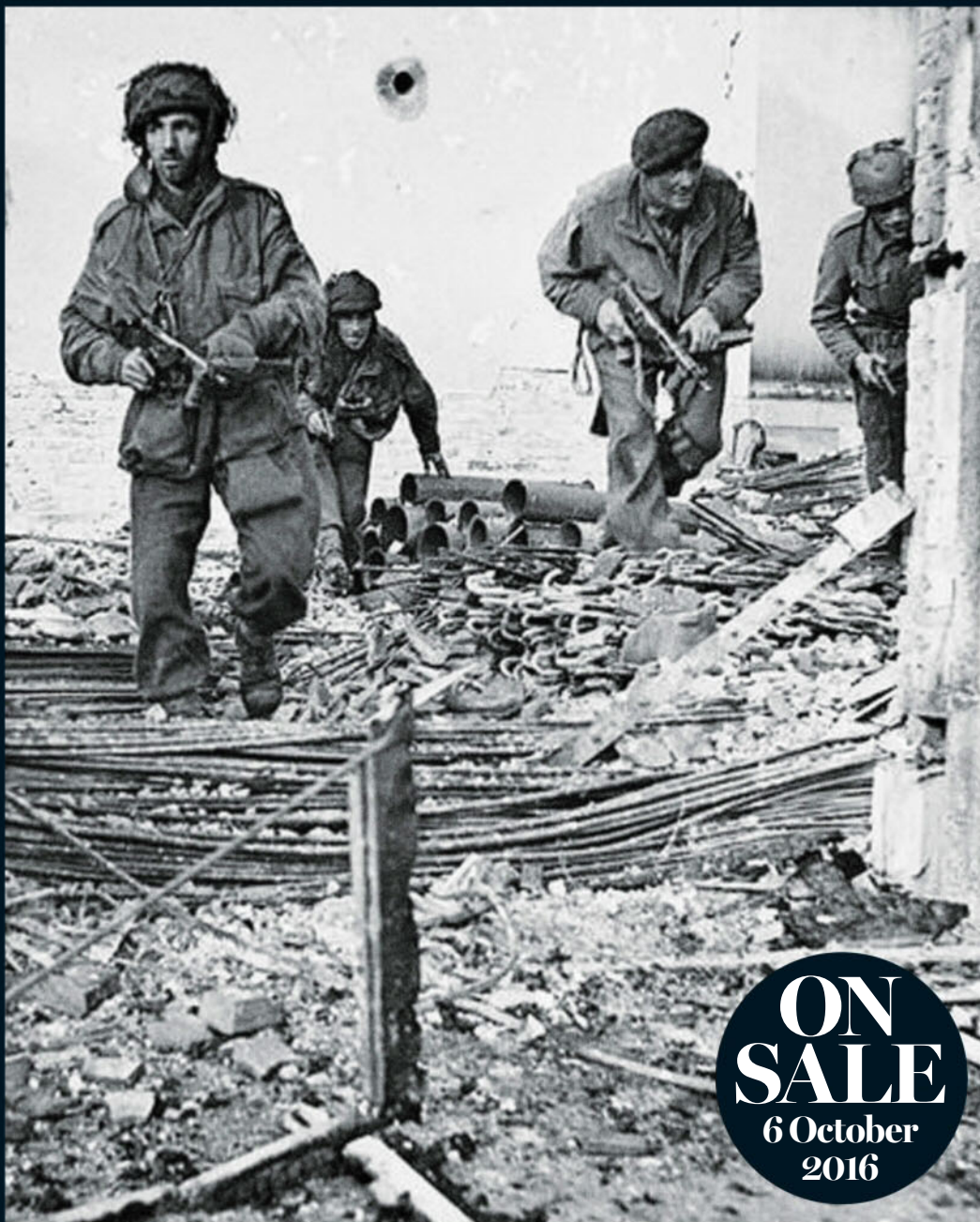
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SALAMANCA EAGLE

This golden spoil of war was taken at Wellington's famous victory and is now a prized possession of the East Lancashire Regiment

Ensign John Pratt of the 30th Foot captured this imperial eagle during the Battle of Salamanca

On 22 July 1812, Arthur Wellesley (the future duke of Wellington) won a famous victory against the French at the Battle of Salamanca, a clash that saw the French army driven from Andalusia and Madrid temporarily liberated. It was a major turning point in the Peninsular War, and among the spoils of the Portuguese-British triumph were two regimental eagles.

Each regiment of Napoleon's Grande Armée carried its own golden eagle as a personal badge of honour – styled after the standards of the Roman legions. The loss of an eagle in battle brought shame to the entire regiment, and as such they were defended fiercely – conversely, the enemies of France considered them to be prestigious war trophies.

At the Battle of Salamanca, Ensign John Pratt of the 30th Regiment of Foot captured the eagle pictured here, which belonged to the 22 Regiment de la Ligne. It was displayed alongside Wellington's coffin as he lay in state in 1852. After Napoleon's final defeat, he ordered the destruction of all the remaining imperial eagles, meaning most of those still in existence are those recovered from battlefields across Europe.

This eagle was kept in Chelsea Hospital, London, for over a century before it was ceremonially returned to the East Lancashire Regiment in 1947. It is now on permanent display at the Lancashire Infantry Museum.

Below: The Distribution of the Eagle Standards by Jacques-Louis David, depicting Napoleon and his generals in December 1804



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